THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 58 PAMELA ANDERSON WHY I AM BARB WIRE

WIZARD®

MADUREIRA-GARNER

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Jean Grey
MANSION SECURITY WAS DEACTIVATED...
FROM WITHIN ... BRZZZT ...
BETRAYED BY ONE OF OUR OWN.
PROFESSOR XAVIER ... BRZZZT ...
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YOU MAY HAVE ... BRZZZT ... KILLED THE X-MEN ...
BRZZZT ... BUT THE DREAM WILL NEVER DIE...

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WIZARD®

Number 58
JUNE 1996

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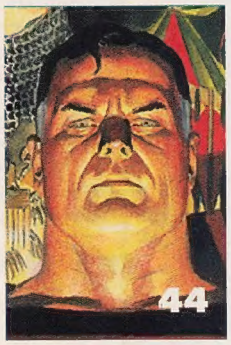

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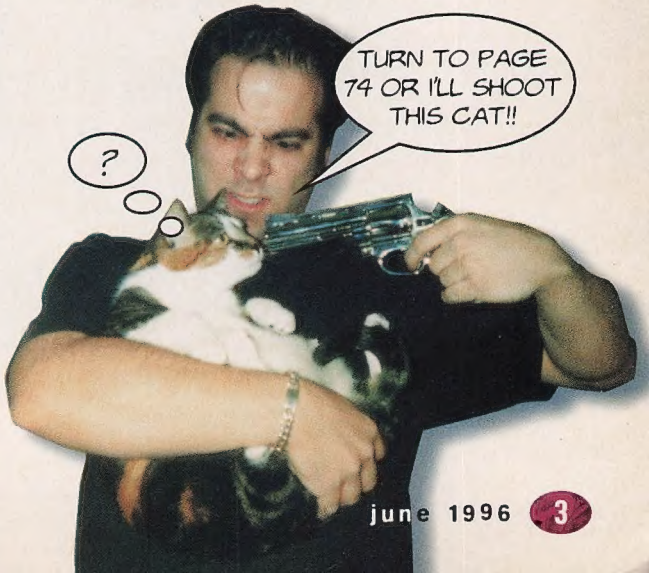
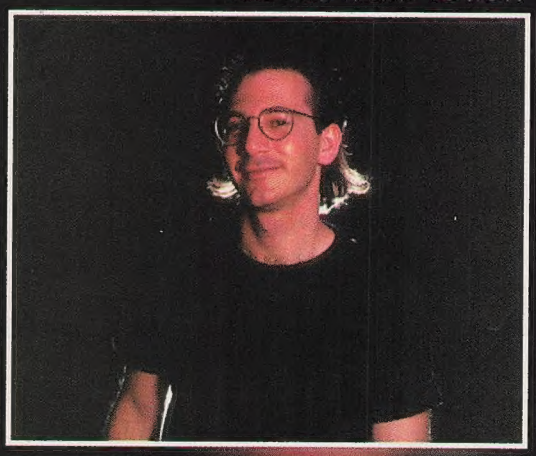


HEY! HEY! YOU TALKIN' TO ME?
ARE YOU TALKIN' TO ME?!



THE TIDE IS TURNING

This is the first month in a long time that you can actually feel like there's a lot going on. Between Marvel working with Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld to Mark Waid and Alex Ross' Kingdom Come to Spawn's 50th issue, major events are popping up left and right in the comics industry. There's more for *Wizard* to write about, comment on and make fun of. This leads to a few things, but most of all, a better *Wizard*. A *Wizard* that you can't wait to crack open to learn the latest news, such as who's working on what with whom.

I hope you've noticed that we've really stepped up to the plate to take you more behind the scenes of the comics world. We have plenty more surprises ahead as we pick up steam and head into our five-year celebration issue.

This month, we've highlighted independent comics that we feel deserve more attention. Independents have played an integral role in the advancement of the industry.

We also have an original Milk & Cheese strip by Evan Dorkin that you have to read. We received great feedback on the Milk & Cheese Board Game from *Wizard* #54, and wanted to bring you more of this wacky duo. To find out more about Milk & Cheese, write to Slave Labor Graphics, 979 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose, CA 95128. Or you can call 1-800-866-8929 for a catalog.

We've received lots of feedback regarding our monthly how-to-draw column and now we're going to give it a cool twist. Over the next few months, *Wizard* will turn to the top comics professionals and have them do a special How-to column in their area of expertise. This month, we've got the ever-popular, and some say wild (but always cool), Jimmy Palmiotti showing us how to ink.

As for goodies, you should've found the Fairchild HoloChrome card, an Onslaught poster, the very neat new calendar and an *Avengelyne* #1/2 offer—well, there's a lot to play with.

You've got lots of reading ahead—so get crackin'!

Gareb S. Shamus

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Stuff you don't ever read...

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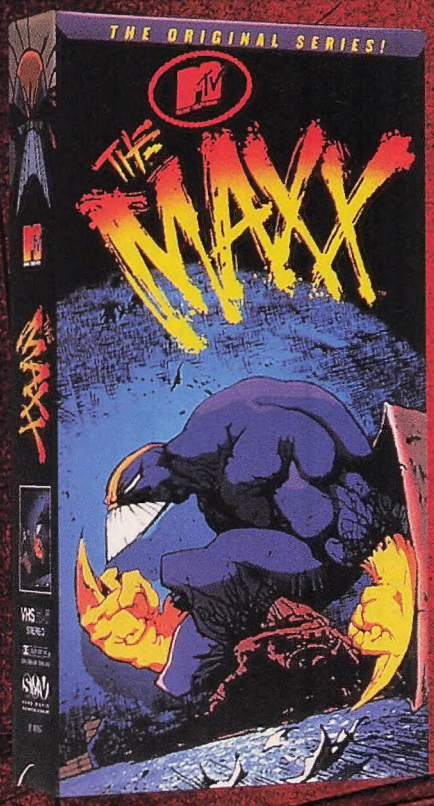

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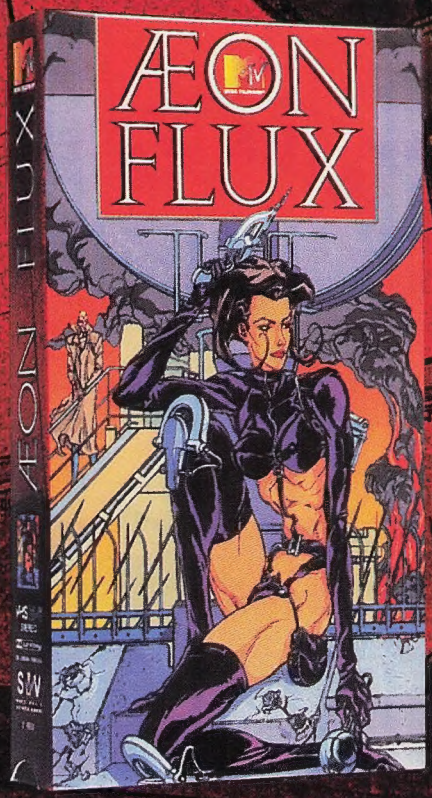

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MAGIC WORDS

Fight the Power

The letters topic I've seen more often than any other over the past few months has been the comic shop raids in Oklahoma and Florida that were reported in issue #54's "Wizard News." We've received hundreds of letters expressing varying degrees of shock, fear and, more than anything else, disgust.

The disgust level will undoubtedly increase with the news that Planet Comics, the Oklahoma City shop that was raided, has gone out of business. The owners, beset by legal battles and community protests, have closed up shop.

Once again, the barbarians are at the gate, but this time they've got badges. One would think that a local sheriff's department would have better things to do than debate the appropriateness of a public-service flier like DC Comics' *Death Talks About Life,* but such is apparently not the case.

A man much wiser than I once said that eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. Let's be vigilant out there!

And so, on to the letters...

Creators Knew the Rules

Dear Wizard,

I was saddened to read about the passing of Jerry Siegel. Siegel, as everyone knows, teamed with Joe Shuster to create Superman. It is always sad when a pioneer and true giant of the industry passes away. I just hope that Siegel's passing doesn't start another round of attacks on Marvel and DC for the way they treated their original creators.

While it is true that men like Siegel, Shuster, Bob Kane and Jack Kirby weren't given the monetary compensation they deserved for their creations, everyone has to realize these men and these publishers played the game by the rules of their day. There was no Image Comics or Dark Horse Comics for creators to go to in the old days. If Todd McFarlane wanted to create a book like *Spawn* in the '60s, he would have had no choice but to work for one of the big two. DC did take care of Siegel and Shuster later on in their careers and they do credit these creators on the title pages of the Superman books. While this isn't the same as giving them control of the characters, it is a positive step, as it keeps the names of these great creators alive for future generations.

People who think these creators got "screwed" because they don't own the rights to the characters they created are mistaken. They played by the set of rules in effect at that time. Is it wrong that Babe Ruth didn't make $8,000,000 a year playing baseball? Of course not. And it isn't wrong that comic creators from the Golden and Silver Ages didn't become independently wealthy working on comic books. That just wasn't how it was back then.

Michael Fay
Michael_Fay%FFIC@notesw.compuserve.com

An interesting theory. In today's comic world, where "creator's rights" is the battle cry and most new comic properties are creator-owned, very few people take the time to look at the other side of the argument. Men like Siegel and Shuster and Kane and Kirby operated under a different set of rules than is in place today. Should DC Comics "give Batman back" to creator Bob Kane? It would be a damned friendly gesture, but a damned foolish one from a business standpoint. I dare say Warner Brothers, DC's parent company, might have a thing or two to say about that, especially come next movie-time.

It's nice to see that DC acted honorably in giving Siegel and Shuster pensions. It would also be nice to see some of today's creators, many of whom have benefited from the earlier works of men like Siegel and Shuster, take the initiative to set up a fund for past comic creators who didn't fare as well financially. Heck, if someone out there is willing to run it, I'll pony up the first $100.

'Bad Girls' is an Appropriate Name

Dear Wizard,

This letter is about the whole "Bad Girls" trend. I know you're probably tired of it by now, but please bear with me—there are pros and cons to any issue. With this issue, the main pro is the emergence of many female characters in their own titles. The

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS

THE 21st CENTURY IS HERE

Cyberella
Howard Chaykin • Don Cameron

Gemini Blood
Christopher Hinz • Tommy Lee Edwards

Vermillion
Lucius Shepard • Al Davison

Bloody Mary
Garth Ennis • Carlos Ezquerra

The Black Lamb
Timothy Truman

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main con is the visual representation of these characters.

If a comic character, female or otherwise, is supposedly intelligent, then why choose attire woefully unfit for combat? Running, kicking and fighting in thongs, six-inch heels and barely there spandex "outfits" is absurd. I'm aware that comics are not real, but this crosses any line of reason and goes straight to the point of absurdity.

It is upsetting that female characters must be well-endowed and scantily clad to get their own series. This speaks very poorly of the comic reading community. I think that women and men would read a well written comic about a female character regardless of the woman's bra size or costume (or lack thereof). As a woman and comic fan, I find this current wave of "heroines" sad and shameful. True, writers and artists have the right to portray women this way. But that doesn't necessarily mean that they should.

Mary Jordan
103743.3060@Compuserve.com

True. Just because the people involved in the Manhattan Project could make an atomic bomb does not mean they should have. Just because NBC can make a stupid, putrid one-joke TV show and call it "Friends" definitely does not mean they should either.

So, too, just because comic creators can come up with thong bikinis, compass-drawn breasts and plots that serve as little more than vehicles to get their female leads naked, that does not necessarily mean they should.

Does this speak "very poorly of the comic reading community"? Probably. But the only thing we can do is wait. People will tire of "Bad Girls" and be taken by something else, and this too shall pass. The only "Bad Girl" comics left will be the few that are actually well done. Let's just hope that whatever the next comic trend/fascination is, it's no sillier than the present one.

Dear Wizard,

Is it possible for "Bad Girls" to get any badder? Whoa, Nellie! I guess I might think about asking Vampirella out for dinner and a movie, especially if she wears that fine outfit of hers. But no way would Lady Death or Shi be on my date list! They're just way too bad. My dad always told me never to date a girl who could beat me up. I guess there's not too many girls in comics I could date, huh?

Jeremy Bates
Sidney, IA

P.S. I have to ride 45 minutes to a store where I can buy your magazine.

That's good advice your dad gave you. You should also always remember to cater to a woman with a gun. That's good advice too.

Guess you're right. There probably aren't too many girls in comics you could date. But if you've actually spent time thinking about it, my best guess is that there aren't too many girls you could date, period. There probably aren't too many girls you could beat up either.

P.S. We appreciate your support. We appreciate it so much that a complimentary subscription is now headed your way. Enjoy. And avoid those "Bad Girls." They might give you bad dreams.

THE BUNNY AWARD

be afraid

Paul Schiraldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

Free the Toys

Dear Jim,

I'm really peeved! I was at work one day, working my cool job at a Kay-Bee Toy and Hobby store in Florida. Anyhoo, I'm an avid toy buyer. I use the term "buyer" because unlike some (or maybe most) people, I'm not just a "collector" who's out to make a buck. The collector mentality had always semi-bothered me, but not until today did I feel compelled to write this letter!

I buy the Star Wars and Spawn action figures and, yes, I OPEN THEM! Some dork came into the store looking for a C-3PO. I told him we were sold out, but mentioned that I had one at home. He asked if I opened it, and I said I did. He got all flustered and said I shouldn't even be allowed to buy such toys because I don't recognize their true value, after which I told him to bite me.

Well, I own a lot of comics too, and you know what? I read them! Last time I checked, toys were made to be played with and comics were made to be read. I will go on buying toys and opening toys and buying comics and reading comics.

Jonathan Arena
North Miami Beach, Florida

I am with you, my brother-man. The whole collector mentality is occasionally strange, but nowhere moreso than with "collectible toys." I mean, you can use a comic for its intended purpose—reading—and it can still be "collectible." But if you use a toy for what it's for—playing with it—it suddenly loses a large portion of its "collectible value." Pretty silly.

By the way, you may notice we've added a toy price guide to our pages. Why? Because there was a HUGE call for it among our readers. The collector mentality exists, and it is big. I hope this guide and others like it don't unduly influence people, and I hope they keep playing with their toys, much like I do with my cool-as-hell Fin Fang Foom. The toy is great. I threw away the box.

Fanzine O' Fury

Mr. McLauchlin,

A friend of mine told me that you were a Nick Fury fan. So here's a copy of *Nick Notes*, my Nick Fury fanzine. Hope you like it.

Danny Interlandi
Hartford, CT

Thanks much, chum! The darned-near-

complete Fury checklist will sure come in handy. Any interested Fury-o-philes out there should get info by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Danny at: 30 Fenwick St., Hartford, CT 06114.

The Dairy Section

Dear Wizard,

What kind of cheese is Cheese from Milk and Cheese? I say cheddar.

Chris Wilson
Miami, Florida
Macksalmon@aol.com

Tough question. I had to go right to Milk and Cheese creator Evan Dorkin for an answer. Evan seems to be a little confused on the subject himself. He sez, "I don't know. We don't discuss it much. He's got holes like a Swiss, but he looks more like a Cheddar. All I know is that he's not government cheese."

Personally, my money's on Monterey Jack.

Dear Wizard,

I've got a couple questions:

1) How do you pronounce Chuck Wojtkiewicz's last name?

2) Who would win in a fight between Milk and Cheese and Lobo?

Yale Chasin
Short Hills, NJ
Blink AoA@aol.com

Fortunately for you, I've got a couple answers:

1) The penciler of Justice League America *pronounces his last name "voit-kev-itch."*

2) After seeing Lobo get his Czarnian butt handed to him by Wolverine (the most overrated runt in comics) in Marvel versus DC *#3, there can be only one answer: Milk and Cheese all the way.*

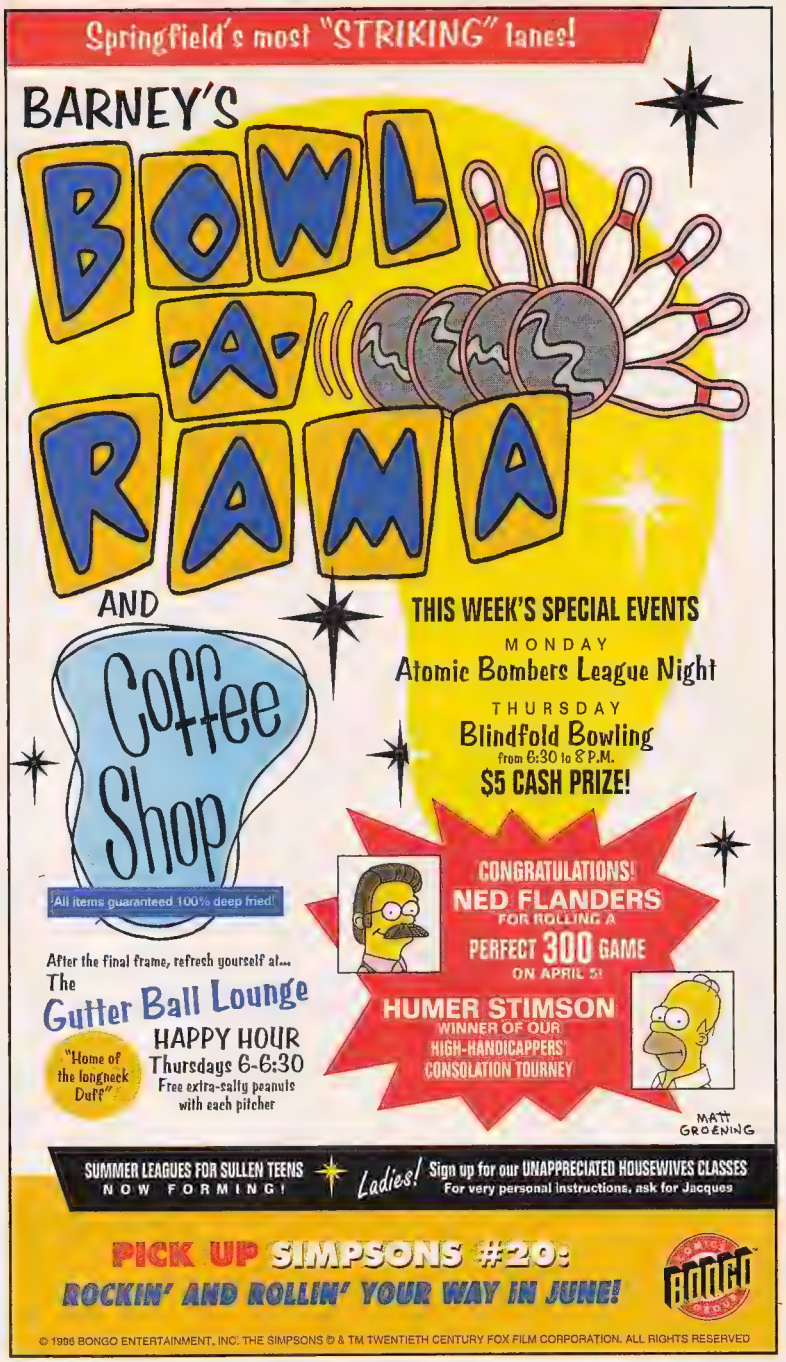
Dear Wizard,

My man made me play "Milk and Cheese's Stupid Little Board Game," the cool freebie that came with *Wizard* #54, with him. While I was playing (and winning), I composed this little ditty that you can sing while playing the game:

"Milk and Cheese/Milk and Cheese/Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo Doo."

Lynn Ritchie
Chapel Hill, NC

I like it. It's danceable, it's got a nice beat. You can move to it. I give it an 86.



Hey! It's Pen Pals

Meet your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page 12. **NOTE: Please write your age on the envelope.** If you want your Internet address listed instead, please post your info in the new Pen Pals message board on the "Wizard World" forum of America Online. Hey, make a friend!

PEN PALS

Mary Patchin
Age: 14 Sex: Female
1124 Ferry St.
Martinez, CA 94553
Likes: Image and Viz titles, Batman

Tony Martinez
Age: 21 Sex: Male
Ave. Sonora #405
Rio Bravo, Tam., Mexico 88900
Likes: Spider-Man, Batman, all X-titles

Garrick Jorgensen
Age: 16 Sex: Male
3400 Carrie Estates Dr.
Rock Hill, SC 29730
Likes: X-titles, Spider-titles, *Hulk*

Gale Dumont
Age: 15 Sex: Female
111 Gardenia St.
Tavernier, FL 33070
Likes: X-titles, Star Wars titles, *The X-Files*

Jerry Lane
Age: 18 Sex: Male
3000 Ross St.
Clovis, NM 88101
Likes: *X-Men, X-Factor, Excalibur*

Mark Williams
Age: 25 Sex: Male
120 West 6th St. Apt. #4
Front Royal, VA 22630
Likes: Batman, X-Men, horror comics

Catalin Mititiuc
Age: 13 Sex: Male
16704 SE Mill St.
Portland, OR 97233
Likes: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Generation X*

Wolverine's in the Doghouse

Dear Wiz Kids,

How come in your price guide, the first appearance of Ace the Bat-Hound (in *Batman* #92) is actually worth *more* than Wolverine's first appearance (in *The Incredible Hulk* #181)?

Henok Kebede
Wheator, MD

Because Batman #92 is a very old and scarce classic Silver Age issue with less copies left in circulation than Hulk #181. It's also much tougher to find in any sort of decent condition, and Ace could kick Wolverine's sorry butt any day of the week. Which, I guess, also means that Ace could take Lobo. That's one mean pooch.

All Greek to Me

Dear Wizard,

What is that little horseshoe shape on Omega Red's headband?

Philip Inglis
Walkerton, Ontario, Canada

That, my funky friend, is an omega. It's the last letter in the Greek alphabet.

Jim Can Find Anybody

My Dearest Wizard,

What's Brian Bolland working on these days? That guy's work is beautiful!

Daniel Johnson
Pasadena, CA

We called Brian (way over in merry olde England) to find out what he was up to. Over tea and crumpets, the man famous for Batman: The Killing Joke, his stunning painted covers and a long run on the Eagle Comics version of Judge Dredd told us that he's currently painting a cover for the "Return of Barry Allen" Flash trade paperback for DC Comics. He's also got an eight-page story in April's Batman Black and White mini-series and is doing his ongoing strip "Mr. Mamoulian" in every issue of Negative Burn.

Dear Wizard,

Where the hell is Mark Texeira?

Dennis Tanyag
Manila, Philippines

Upstate New York.

In terms of work, Texeira, who is well known for his runs on Marvel's Ghost Rider and Sabretooth, has recently shifted gears from traditional pencil-and-ink art to painted art. He just completed Spider-Man: Legacy of Evil, an all-painted one-shot book written by Kurt Busiek, and is doing some work for Penthouse Comix. He also did a killer cover for Wizard's Wolverine Special, now at a comic store near you, and adds, "I may have a creator-owned title from Event Comics coming soon, and maybe another painted Spider-Man project. I always want to do more Spider-Man."

Don't Call Them Dolls!

Dear Wizard,

Are there ever going to be Elfquest action figures? How about Bone action figures from Jeff Smith's series? And while we're at it, why do they call them "action figures"? They really don't do much in terms of action.

Mike Glover
Phoenix, AZ

We called Richard Pini, who's the "RP" in WaRP Graphics, publishers of Elfquest. He said, "There is not any licensing in place yet to do Elfquest toys, but as soon as the Elfquest movie has a green light, I'm sure we'll get something going."

Vijaya Iyer over at Cartoon Books, publishers of Bone, said that they have a Great Dragon statue in the works for 1996, but no action figures. Her plans are similar to Pini's. "We're working on getting Bone into film, and when we do, there will be lots of toys."

They call them "action figures" because if they called them "dolls" (which they really are), tough he-man guys like you would never buy them.

You Keeled My Bruther!

Dear Wizard,

Due to the fact that Cyclops and Havok are brothers, their mutant powers can't hurt each other. But if Cyclops had a gun and shot Havok, would that hurt Havok?

Greg Beno
Baltimore, MD

Oh, yeah. That would hurt like hell.

Hide Your Valuables

Hey Wizard,

In the "Lois & Clark" episode that aired October 15th, 1995, Lois was searching through some files to find out who owned a certain safe deposit box that was broken into. The name of the box owner was Dennis O'Neil. Was this a reference to Batman editor Dennis O'Neil or was it just a coincidence?

Leanne Stephenson
Provo, UT

No coincidence at all. As first reported way back in issue #29's Comicfest article, the DC Comics crew has a heavy involvement in the Superman TV show and the program is dripping with little comic references. Look for 'em and collect 'em all!

Monster Mix-Up

Dear Wizard,

What the heck were you thinking? In "Magic Words" in *Wizard* #53, Timothy

PENPALS

Chris Davenport
Age: 16 Sex: Male
178 SE 33rd Ave.
Hillsboro, OR 97123
Likes: X-titles, *Wolverine*, *Lady Death*

Carrie Rasmussen
Age: 15 Sex: Female
W4272 Mackville Rd.
Appleton, WI 54915
Likes: *Evil Ernie*, *Spawn*, *Generation X*

Mahdesi Iskandar
Age: 22 Sex: Male
Jalan Rawa Belong II-C No. 15
Jakarta 11480, Indonesia
Likes: *Mike Danger*, *Justice League America*, *WildC.A.T.s*

Leo Han
Age: 12 Sex: Male
5315 Holmes Pl.
Boulder, CO 80303
Likes: X-titles, Spidor-titles, *WildC.A.T.s*

Matt Six
Age: 15 Sex: Male
340 Thornycroft Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10312
Likes: *Daredevil*, *Spawn*, *Wizard*

Andre Canis
Age: 20 Sex: Male
e-mail: UZSA8A@IBM RHRZ.UNI-BONN.DE
Likes: Star Wars titles, *Groo*, *Cerebus*

Zach Crisman
Age: 14 Sex: Male
e-mail: ZCRISMAN@LINKNET.KIT-SAP.WA.US
Likes: *The Maxx*, *Spawn*, Extreme titles

WHAT IT TAKES №11

What's it take to make a great comic book?

SYMBOLISM.

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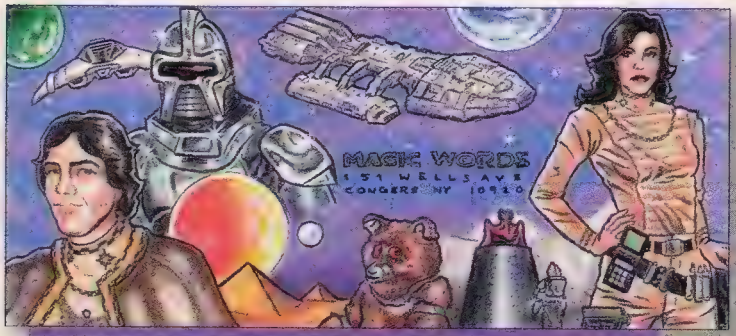
BIG ENTERTAINMENT

LETTER ART

Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of *Night Man #∞* signed by Steve Englehart, a *DC versus Marvel* #1 signed by Ron Marz, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original art page from the *Marvel Universe Series V* card set by the always generous Steven Butler. (An extra-special thanks to you, Steven!) **Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address on the *back* of your envelope.**

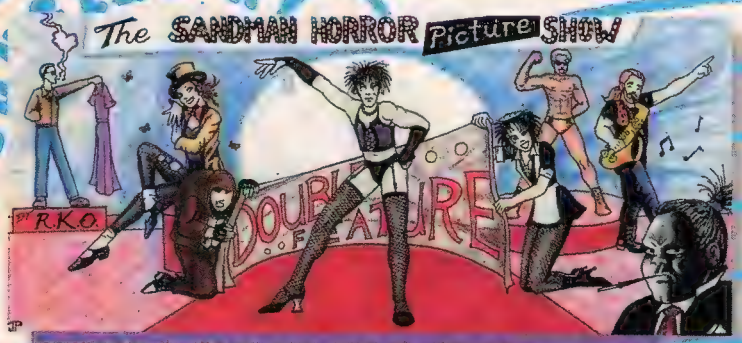
envelope of the month

BATMAN vs. CAPT. AMERICA Joe Neeld Bellaire, OH

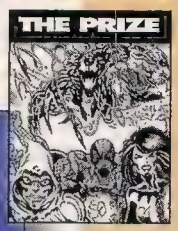


BATTLESTAR GALACTICA Chantel Smith Stockton, NJ

DIE FLEDERMAUS vs. BATMAN Bob Cook Milwaukee, WI



THE SANDMAN HORROR PICTURE SHOW
Joe Pratt Simi Valley, CA



Chin wrote a letter asking who would win in a fight between Godzilla and Fin Fang Foom. Your answer: Fin Fang Foom. Yeah, right!

If these two actually did meet, Godzilla would kick Foom's scaly butt into another hemisphere! You don't know squat about Japanese monsters!

Joey Hall
Benson, NC

I "don't know squat about Japanese monsters"? Thank you. I can't remember when I've received such a nice compliment.

Get Real, Folks

Wizard People,

1) Is it just me, or does "The Real World" on MTV suck?

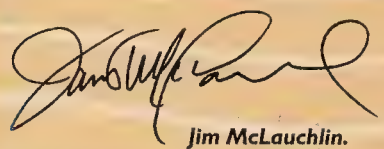
2) Why is Iceland green and Greenland ice?

Eric Bottos
Pearland, TX

1) Yep. The very concept of recording someone's every waking moment on videotape, when they are fully aware that they are being taped, and then calling it "real" is perhaps the most asinine notion I have yet to hear in my young life. Oh, wait! Is this being recorded for posterity? Oh, then I didn't mean it! No, really, I love that suckhole show with all my heart. Honest! That's my real reaction!

2) A misdirection play. Norse settlers of Iceland basically wanted the rest of the world to leave the nice, warm springs-fed island alone, so they gave it the unappealing name "Iceland." They further tried to steer people to icy, desolate Greenland by giving it a more appealing name.

Speaking of misdirection plays, I'm going to run an end-around to the nearest papasan and take a nap. See you next month. Until then, I remain...



Jim McLauchlin.

Jim McLauchlin is calling an immediate moratorium on these, the most overused words of the '90s: "interactive" and "synergy."

Send letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@AOL.Com

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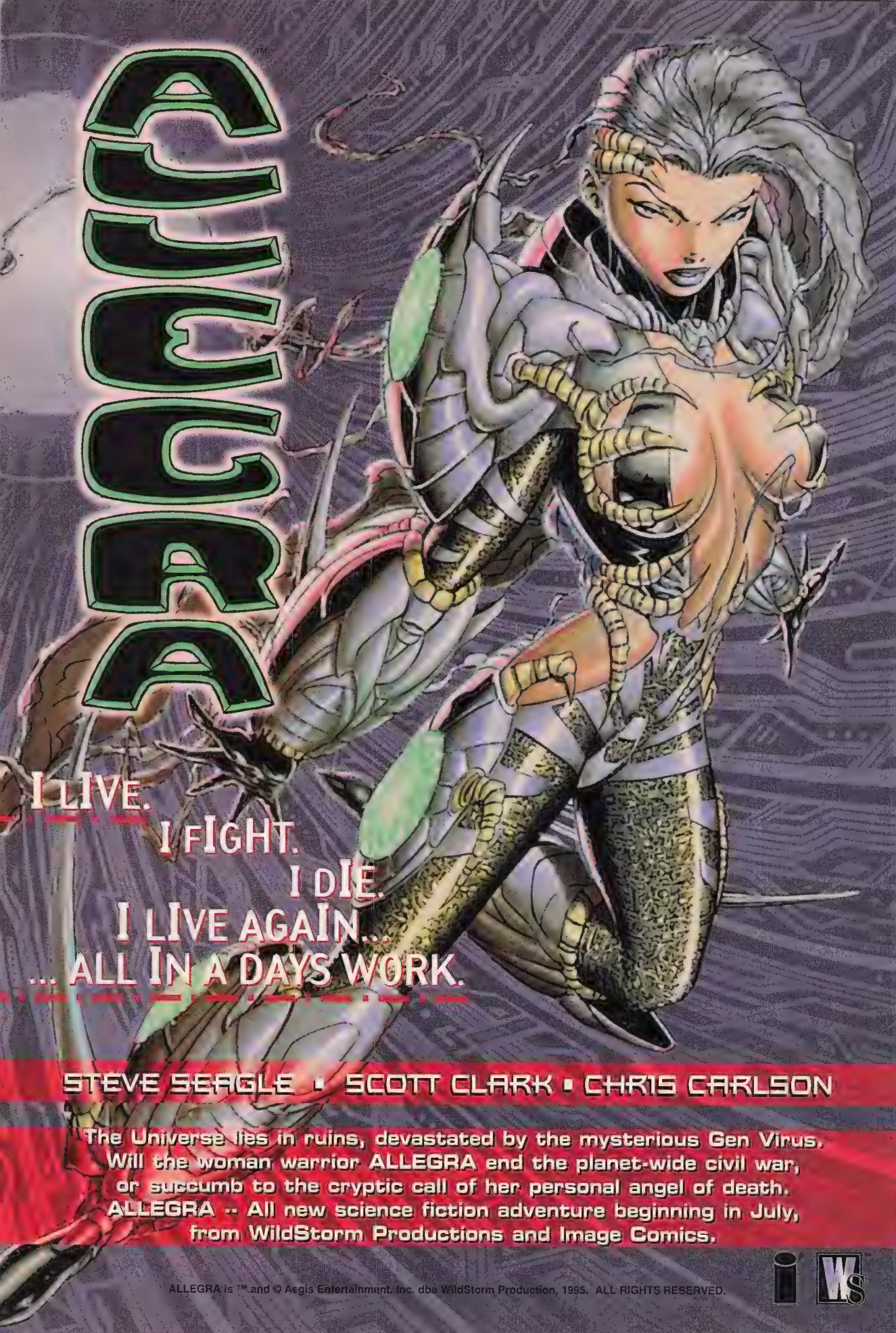
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LEE RETURNS TO WILDC.A.T.s

The Beast goes on Ultra-Slim Fast diet. "I haven't stopped crapping for three weeks and I'm molting," said emaciated mutant. "Good Lord, which way to the nearest can?"

New hero "Captain We-Don't-Need-No-Stinkin'-Badges" hits comic con circuit. "He just stood there and ate 18 bales of cotton candy," said witness. "Then he pased out. I went through his pockets and got $1.80."

Comic geek killed by Swamp Thing in Louisiana Bayou. Eyewitness said, "He offered him a wedge of cheese. Then Swampy mumbled something about constipation and ripped his friggin' head off."

Image Comics co-founder and ***WildC.A.T.s*** creator **Jim Lee** recently confirmed that he would be returning to the title that helped launch the company in 1992, along with spearheading a team-up with the **X-Men**.

Beginning with *WildC.A.T.s* #31, Lee will resume the penciling chores, teaming with series writer **Alan Moore** and inker **Richard Bennett**. As WildStorm Director of Marketing **Jeff Mariotte** explained, Lee's homecoming to *WildC.A.T.s* follows on the heels of "**Fire From Heaven**," the multi-title WildStorm crossover. "It's a whole new story arc, a big gang war that Alan's been building up to in the book," Mariotte said.

Mariotte also revealed that the opportunity to collaborate with Moore "was a big factor in Jim deciding to come back to the *C.A.T.s*."

Lee himself admitted much enthusiasm in working with Moore for the first time. "Part of my desire to work on the book again was that I really liked the direction Alan was going," Lee said. "For all intents and purposes, he's going to be the writer of the book, and I'm going to be the artist of the book. I just want to come along for the ride and have some fun."

Lee's fans may wonder how the creator plans to juggle this new commitment to *WildC.A.T.s* with his other high-profile projects, the much-anticipated makeovers of Marvel's ***Fantastic Four*** and ***Iron Man***. Although the Marvel work involves co-writing and penciling *Fantastic Four* with longtime collaborator **Brandon Choi**, as well as supervising *Iron Man*'s new direction with writer **Scott Lobdell** (*Generation X*), Lee will be taking great advantage of the lag-time between the respective releases.

"He's going to be working on it concurrently," said Mariotte, "but he's getting a head-start on *WildC.A.T.s*."

Lee plans to intersperse his contributions to each. "I have a pretty rough idea of how much I can do a year," Lee said, "and this is what I wanted to put in to complete my schedule."

While Lee's first stab back on *WildC.A.T.s* debuts in late May/early June, the Marvel titles are scheduled to hit stores in September. **Travis Charest**, the current artist of *WildC.A.T.s*, will still be involved with the series in limited capacity upon Lee's return.

Regular readers of the title have already seen the split-format the book has utilized in recent months, juxtaposing the major storyline on Khera featuring Charest's art, with Dave Johnson's rendering of the Earthbound WildC.A.T.s. As Lee explained, Charest will replace Johnson, supplying the artwork on "short stories that would impact or parallel what I'm doing," thus giving both artists additional breathing room to tackle the *WildC.A.T.s/X-Men* crossover tentatively slated for year's end. Further off, look for a *WildC.A.T.s* spin-off title to emerge from WildStorm. ***Wildcore***, first revealed to be in pre-planning stages at 1995's San Diego Comic Con, is expected to unite *WildC.A.T.s* alumni Brandon Choi and Dave Johnson. Still quite early in conception, *Wildcore* will introduce *WildC.A.T.s* fans to the exploits of a brand new team of adventurers. ■ *Scott Beatty*

ahead

NO MORE BAT CROSSOVERS!

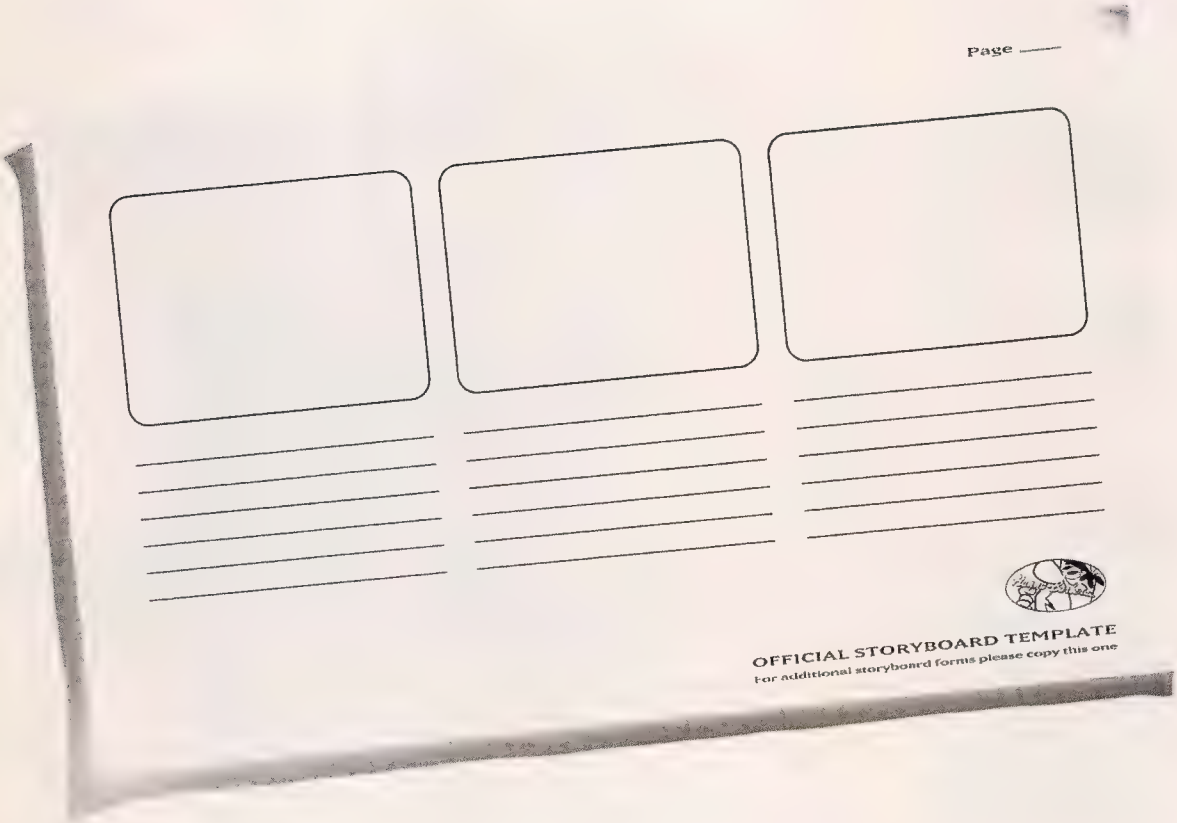
SUPERBOY AND THE RAVERS!

DORAN TO IMAGE!

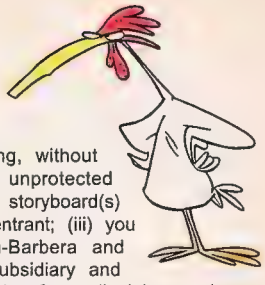
AND COMPANY UPDATES!

Hearing Peculiar Voices? Seeing Little Green Men?

(All We Can Do Is Hope.)



Announcing the Fourth Annual Hanna-Barbera Storyboard Contest.



Win fabulous prizes. Make your mother proud. To see if you've got what it takes to be the next premiere cartoon creator, storyboard artist, animator, or designer, just fill in the blanks.

OFFICIAL RULES

1. **You Gotta Play By The Rules**
   The conceptual storyboard must communicate your cartoon in 51 panels or less, which is 17 or fewer pages. Entrants absolutely must use the Official Storyboard Template, 8 1/2" x 14". The storyboard may be in black & white or color. One board per entrant.

2. **It's Gotta Be Funny, Hip Or Outrageous.**
   The concept and characters must be original and the entrants must be the creator of the storyboard. Entries will be judged on the following criteria: originality of concept; character development; and humor. Because the storyboards will be evaluated on this criteria only and not on technical execution, it is recommended, but not required, that support materials accompany the storyboard (3 pages total to include a written synopsis and/or character designs & backgrounds. All included material must also be 8 1/2" x 14").

3. **Your Board Will Be Seen By Hollywood HotShots**
   Judges will be selected from the animation, television and motion picture industries.

4. **Win "Big" Money**
   The independent jury will select a limited amount of storyboards for final competition. The 10 winners will be chosen from the finalists by the jury and Hanna-Barbera, the decisions of which shall be final and binding. The winners of the constest, age 18 and older, will be awarded the following prizes:

   Grand Prize:
   $5,000
   First Runner-Up:
   $3,000
   Second Runner-Up:
   $1,500
   Seven Honorable Mentions
   Limited Edition Cells (valued at $700 each)

5. **Don't Delay**
   Entries must be received by 6pm on September 15, 1996. All entries must be submitted to Animation Magazine, the Official Contest Facilitator. Mail your storyboard with a completed entry form to:
   Animation Magazine
   Hanna-Barbera Storyboard Contest
   30101 Agoura Court, Suite 110
   Agoura Hills, CA 91301
   Your board will not be returned. Hanna-Barbera is not responsible for lost, damaged, or misdirected storyboards. Please retain a copy for yourself.

6. **You Must Be 18.**
   The competition is open to animators eighteen (18) or older (Refer to Rule 7.)

7. **Unless You're Not**
   For the first time ever, we're opening up this contest to animators age 10 - 17. Three winners in this age group will be awarded an exclusive Hanna-Barbara gift basket(vaued at $60.00) and a limited edi tion cel (valued at $700.00.) Regardless of age, employees and their immediate families of Hanna-Barbera, Inc., Turner Broadcasting System, Inc. and Animation Magazine and their parent, affiliate and subsidiary companies may not participate in this contest; open to animators through out the U.S.and Canada who submit a completed entry form and a storyboard in accordance with the Official Rules.

8. **We'll Let You Know**
   Winners will be notified the week of October 31, 1996. All other entrants will receive notification by mail after November 22, 1996, along with a list of winners.

9. **Other Legal Stuff.**
   Void where prohibited by law.
   NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. All interpretations of the rules by Hanna-Barbera are final and binding. Prizes are non-transferable. By submitting an entry to the contest, entrants agree to abide by Official Rules and regulations. Winners will be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility and a release granting Hanna-Barbera the right to use their name, voice, likeness and entry for purposes of promotion and advertising on behalf of Hanna-Barbera, without any additional compensation. Hanna-Barbera reserves full right and power to edit, translate, dub or alter the materials. Winners will be responsible for all applicable federal, state, and local taxes.

OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

SUBMISSION RELEASE:

Much of material that is now being submitted in the Storyboard Contest embodies materials, suggestions or ideas substantially similar to those that may have been previously developed by Hanna-Barbera. Further, Hanna-Barbera may begin using material similar to an entrant's which Hanna-Barbera may have received or will receive after the date of an entrant's submission. Because of this, we must require an entrant's consent to the following terms with respect to any material, ideas, proposals, literary materials, videos and musical compositions submitted into the Hanna-Barbera Storyboard Contest by entrants: (i) you confirm that you have read the foregoing policy concerning the acceptance of your materials, and accept the terms of the Official Rules and this Submission Release; (ii) neither the submission of your materials, nor anything in this Release shall be deemed to limit or restrict the rights of Hanna-Barbera to use, nor prohibit Hanna-Barbera from using, without obligation to entrant, materials submitted to, acquired or created by Hanna-Barbera prior to, after, or independently of entrant's submission(s), and materials not otherwise protected by the copyright laws of the United States, including, without limitation, the unprotected elements of the storyboard(s) submitted by entrant; (iii) you release Hanna-Barbera and their parent, subsidiary and affiliate companies from all claims and liabilities with respect to their use of any such similar or identical material; and (iv) you release Hanna-Barbera and their parent, subsidiary and affiliate companies from liability for loss or damage to the materials you submitted and understand that they are not obligated to return such materials to you.

ENTRANT'S WARRANTIES:

Each entrant represents and warrants that the materials submitted by such entrant shall be free and clear from all claims of third parties and that no part of the material submitted, nor the exercise by Hanna-Barbera of any rights granted hereunder will violate or infringe upon the trademark, trade name, copyright, right of privacy, property rights or any other right of any party. Each entrant agrees to indemnify and hold Hanna-Barbera and their parent, subsidiary and affiliate companies harmless from and against any claim, loss, liability or cost of any person, firm or corporation including reasonable legal fees, arising out of any breach of any warranty, representation or undertaking made by each entrant in these Rules.

FIRST NEGOTIATION:

By entering this contest, you do not lose the right to your storyboard; however, upon acceptance of a prize, each winner agrees to negotiate in good faith solely with Hanna-Barbera regarding the acquisition of audiovisual and ancillary rights in and to the storyboard. This period of negotiation begins on the date the winner receives the prize and continues for 120 days.

I have fully read and understand and agree to the terms and conditions contained in the Official Rules, the Submission Release, the Entrant's Warranties, and the First Negotiation provision.

_____
Print Entrant Name
Print Second Entrant Name (if applicable)

_____
Signature(s) Date

_____
Signature of Parent or Guardian (if under age of eighteen(18))

_____
Address

_____
Date of Birth

_____
Day Phone/Evening Phone

_____
Title of Submission

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BATMAN: No More Crossovers

DC Comics' Batman family titles, which have thrived for the past few years on a series of lengthy crossover epics and intricate ongoing subplots, will be taking a different approach starting this summer.

In a "From the Den" message scheduled to appear in the October-dated issues due for release in August, Group Editor **Dennis O'Neil** promises fans that "for at least a year, every story will be complete in the title it begins in. None will run more than three consecutive issues. While we're at it, we'll give you at least one single-issue story each month."

The thinking behind this shift in approach, according to Scott Peterson, editor of *Detective Comics* and *Batman and Robin Adventures*, as well as Batman Group Liaison with the press, is that "despite the tremendous success we've had with these huge crossover stories, from '**Knightfall**' to '**Contagion**,' we want to make sure we aren't making it too difficult for the casual fan to pick up any issue and get right into the story."

Stressing that Batman writers **Doug Moench**, **Chuck Dixon**, **Alan Grant** and O'Neil himself "have always done a great job of making even the massive crossover stories accessible to new readers," Peterson explained that "there are still some people who don't want to pick up a story if they've missed the first couple of parts. Since we want to be as reader friendly as possible, it seemed a good idea to try a more simplified approach for a while."

While there will be one or more single issue stories each month, no title will be restricted to only one-part stories, Peterson said. "We would be cheating our readers if we did nothing but that. We will have a variety of stories, two-parters, three-parters, whatever seems appropriate. But every story will be begun and ended in the title in which it begins, as will every subplot. If someone starts a Sgt. Bullock subplot, for example, he will develop it and finish it in his book. There may be references to it in other titles if Bullock appears there, but it will not be advanced in any way. And we're currently wrapping up all the existing subplots to clear the slate."

The Batman family consists of ***Batman***, ***Detective Comics***, ***Shadow of the Bat***, ***Batman Chronicles***, ***Legends of the Dark Knight***, ***Robin***, ***Catwoman***, ***Azrael*** and the forthcoming ***Nightwing***, which debuts in August. The latter four titles will greatly benefit from the new approach, Peterson argued, "because the central character stars in only that single book, which means the writers can more readily develop regular supporting casts and subplots."

The less-demanding continuity will also free up the Bat-characters for more team-ups with other DC Universe characters, both in the pages of their own titles or in those of the other heroes, Peterson acknowledged.

"There are benefits and drawbacks to great, sprawling mega-stories," he said, "and there are benefits and drawbacks to this approach. We've done it one way for a while, now we're going to try something else." ■ *Jack Curtin*

We Looked It Up

Ror•schach (rôr' shäk), n. 1 a psychologist's test to analyze someone's personality, where the person being tested tells what is suggested to him through a series of inkblot designs, which are then analyzed and interpreted 2 costumed identity of Walter Kovacs, a disturbed individual hunting for the killer of a number of his superhero friends in DC's 1986-87 *Watchmen* mini-series 3 an old, dilapidated house where young teenagers hang out and scream

STAR WARS: THE MISSING CHAPTER

While waiting for the re-release of the original three Star Wars movies, fans are about to have a brand new chapter in Star Wars history to experience—***Shadows of the Empire***.

Conceived by **George Lucas**, *Shadows of the Empire* is set between "**The Empire Strikes Back**" and "**Return of the Jedi**," bridging the gap with a new story and characters.

"*Shadows of the Empire* is essentially the story that George Lucas wanted to tell, but never filmed," explains editor Pete James. "It's all based on seeds by George Lucas, and then expanded for the novel and the comic book series."

Shadows of the Empire is primarily a novel by Steve Perry, and a six-issue comic book mini-series from Dark Horse Comics by **John Wagner**, **Kilian Plunkett** and **P. Craig Russell**.

"The comic book series isn't an adaptation of the novel," James explains. "Each focuses on a different part of the story, and both stand on their own as good reads."

Dark Horse has had to coordinate heavily with other companies for *Shadows of the Empire*, making it the company's most ambitious project to date. Other tie-in material includes a video game for the Nintendo Ultra-64, a soundtrack from Varese Sarabande, Micro Machines from Galoob, trading cards from Topps, gaming material from West End Games and much more.

"We've never done anything of this magnitude before," explained James, "but it's all working very nicely. Lucasfilm's very pleased, and the buzz is starting to get out there that this is the next big thing. We're hoping that people buy the soundtrack and then listen to it while reading the comic or the book."

Shadows of the Empire #1 is scheduled for an early May release, with the rest of the merchandise to follow soon after. Slated for a July release is ***Boba Fett: Battle of the Bounty Hunters***. Featuring fully painted artwork by Chris Mueller, *Battle of the Bounty Hunters* is a pop-up book, and will see distribution to chain bookstores as well as comic book specialty shops. ■ *Greg McElhatton*

BYRNE set to 'BLOW UP' NEW GODS

John Byrne, well known for a back-to-basics approach on many of the titles he writes and draws, is once again taking that tack when he picks up the reins on **DC**'s ***New Gods*** with issue #12.

Photo by Matthew J. Atanian

"I'm going to blow everything up and start over," Byrne said. "Actually, I've asked the previous creative team to end things with everything blown up, so I can rebuild from there.

"I'm hoping to take it back to where **Jack Kirby** left it after his 11th issue back in the 1970s and build from that base," he continued. "Kirby's plan was to do it as a finite series but I haven't got that option, so I'll try to find new things to do that fit what I see as what Kirby would have done."

New Gods features one of DC's strongest villains—**Darkseid**, ruler of Apokolips—but also a villain who has, in the past, seemed somewhat monomaniacal in his pursuit of what Kirby called the **Anti-Life Equation**. Byrne hopes to remedy that flaw.

"I think I've found a new goal for Darkseid beyond the Anti-Life Equation, which was a great idea for a finite series but too limiting for an ongoing title," he said. "I think **Jim Starlin** pretty much played that all out in the ***Cosmic Odyssey*** series a few years back anyway. A lot of this will tie into the relationship between the New Gods and the gods of Olympus that I've hinted at in ***Wonder Woman***."

Byrne does fear that *New Gods* might add to his recent reputation of taking on short-term projects. "I have this bad habit of taking on projects I think are fun rather than projects that are terribly commercial. I'm going to stick with it for as long as I can. I think this is a book that will be canceled out from under me rather than a book I end up quitting. I'm in for the long haul."

Byrne's first issue of *New Gods*, #12, featuring inks from Bob Wiacek, will be on sale in July. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

Marvel 2099 Editor Takes Flight With Superman

Superman fans still reeling from the break-up of Lois Lane and Clark Kent had better brace themselves: there's a new man in Lois' life, and he has more control over her destiny than the Metropolis Marvel has ever dreamed possible.

"I kind of like that," laughed new Superman Group Editor Joey Cavalieri, "I guess it's better than 'Super-Editor.' "

Cavalieri, most recently the group editor of Marvel's 2099 line, was an editor and writer at DC for nine years, "working with Joe Orlando in the Special Projects Department, concocting lunch box designs, custom comics and goofy ideas for fast food franchise toys and coffee mugs." He also edited children's magazines based on "Looney Tunes" and "Tiny Toon Adventures."

"It's like kind of a reunion up here," Cavalieri chuckled.

Lois' last leader was KC Carlson. "KC started on Supes during the 'Trial of Superman' story about six months ago," recounted Executive Editor and 10-year Superman Editor Mike Carlin. "KC Carlson was editing two edit-intensive groups, Superman and Legion. Superman has five titles, while Legion has two interconnected titles but millions of characters. It was deemed by KC and myself that one or the other series would suffer."

Was it KC's idea to leave the Superman band? "Yes, it was KC's idea," confirmed Carlin. "He always was a Legion man."

Shortly after Carlson voiced his desire to alter his workload, Brian Augustyn, editor of DC's *Flash*, *Impulse* and the Justice League franchise, decided to pursue his freelance writing career full-time. "Joey was 'available' thanks to Marvel," Carlin related. (Cavalieri had been laid off in the latest round of Marvel downsizing.) "Once there was an opening, I held Brian's resignation in hand…and I dialed with the other hand."

"KC is still involved helping Joey," said Carlin, "since KC and Mike McAvennie [Carlson's associate editor] were staffers at the last Super-Summit. In other words, they will remember what was agreed to story-wise." McAvennie is sticking with the Superman titles, while Augustyn's remaining titles will be split between two editors, with Paul Kupperberg picking up *Flash* and *Impulse*, and Ruben Diaz editing the Justice League books..

So what good, solid changes can fans expect in their super-books? "The editor's credit," quipped Carlin. No other line-up changes are planned.

"Hey, I got some plans and schemes of my own," Cavalieri cut in. "I'm just not playing 'sharesies' yet. I don't wanna come off like the upstart outsider, showing everybody how." ■ Ruth Morrison

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Great Eastern Convention Canceled, new New York Shows Planned

The last-minute cancellation of March's **Great Eastern Convention** in New York City brought out some true heroes in the area's comics community. It also opened the door to several promoters who hope to fill the gap they see for a strong local comics show.

At least two organizers have announced new shows for this fall in the wake of GEC's difficulties. The same day that GEC released an apology, **Dynamic Forces** of Haddonfield, N.J., announced a show October 11-14 in Manhattan, including a one-day industry trade show. In addition, plans are also underway by the three local comics dealers who threw together a replacement show within 24 hours of the GEC canceling.

"We feel there is both the opportunity and the need for a professionally run, large-scale trade and consumer show in the New York area," said Nicola Barrucci, president of Dynamic. The other show is planned for Thanksgiving weekend, November 29-December 1 also in Manhattan. Its organizers include Michael Carbonaro of Comic Box Productions in New York City, Vincent Zurzolo from Vincent's Collectibles in Belle Harbor, N.Y., and Vince Gulla of Amazing Comics in Turnersville, N.J.

The three dealers created "Hallelujah Con" in the few hours after **Fred Greenberg**, president of GEC, canceled his show at the Coliseum the day before it was to open. Although calls by *Wizard* to GEC went unreturned, exhibitors reported that GEC officials had told them that the show's floor plan had not been approved by the fire department and the show couldn't open.

In a statement, Greenberg wrote, "We are as stunned as you that the show didn't come off. The damage to our company is great, and we are now in the process of evaluating our situation and determining when we can reschedule the show."

When the show was not allowed to open, Greenberg and the three dealers searched for an alternative site. When no possibilities could be found, Greenberg canceled the show. The other three continued looking and found the nearby Church of St. Paul the Apostle.

The three put down a deposit and spent the rest of the day alerting publishers, creators, dealers and fans. They laid out a plan with 100 tables—40 for dealers and 60 for creators. Fees for creator tables and fan admission were waived. "Being able to give something back to the fans who had been disappointed was a great high," said Zurzolo.

Francisca Pulido of **Chaos! Comics** agreed, saying, "This was a real kick in the pants for the industry. It proved that we can depend on each other, without distributors, marketers or [conventioneers]."

■ *Craig Shutt, with additional reporting by Ruth Morrison*

Downsized Ultraverse Gets a Facelift

After being cut down to just three titles in the reduction of staff and line that hit parent company **Marvel Comics** at the end of 1995, **Malibu Comics' Ultraverse** superhero line is getting a revamp as well, beginning in April.

Editor **Mark Paniccia** realizes that the Ultraverse faces some stiff reader resistance now, but he believes the changes will be for the better.

Ultraverse Unlimited #1

"We're going to roll with the punches—take what we were given and run with it. We want to take our downsized line, tighten the continuity, and make it a reader-friendly superhero universe," he said. "We want a reader to pick these books up and have fun with them and not have to worry about a plotline that started five or six years ago. There will be some instant gratification: You'll pick it up, read it and say, 'I'm glad I bought this book and I'm going to look for it next month.' "

The effort to generate that excitement begins with ***Prime***, as **Keith Giffen**—credited with giving new life to the Justice League, among others—comes on board to write the adventures of Kevin Green and his alter ego. Joining Giffen will be **Humberto Ramos**, fresh from reader acclaim on ***Impulse*** and ***X-Nation***.

Exiles will end with #11, but not before veteran artist **Michael Golden** (*Micronauts*) contributes covers to the final three issues, issues that Paniccia promises will affect the Ultraverse profoundly. The final fate of the team will be revealed in ***Ultraverse Unlimited*** #2 and those events will ripple through the pages of both *Prime* and ***UltraForce***.

Speaking of *UltraForce*, #8 and #9 of that series will explore the future of the Ultraverse, with a story by **Dan Abnett** and Ian Edginton, illustrated by Gary Erskine (*Terminator 2*). When the heroes return from their future visit, it seems that all of Earth's inhabitants—human and ultra alike—have gone insane. Only the **Black Knight** seems immune, and he must discover the reason.

Rune will end with #7, with the storyline picking up again in the premiere issue of *Ultraverse Unlimited*, depicting the fate of Gemini and Warlock. *Rune* will then be relaunched in September.

"We're trying to eliminate the complexity and still give the books substance—including character development," Paniccia explained. "We need things that bring readers back.

"I think we're in a good place," he concluded. "We have the opportunity to take the Ultraverse in a new and better direction." ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

- Word from inside **Marvel** swirls around a plan for a story in August/September called "World Without Heroes," where Marvel heroes will find an alternate universe that has no superheroes. This is supposed to lead up to **Lee** and **Liefeld**'s "Unfinished Business" and may just become an all-new Marvel Universe. More as it comes.
- Longtime ***Amazing Spider-Man*** penciler **Mark Bagley** will leave the title in the coming months to be replaced by ***X-Man*** penciler **Steve Skroce**, Marvel sources indicate.
- Buzz has learned that **Scott McCloud** (*Understanding Comics*) will write ***Superman Adventures*** for DC, based on the upcoming animated series.
- **Elektra** will be getting her own ongoing series in September drawn by **Mike Deodato Jr.** No writer has been slated yet.
- Fan-favorite **Garth Ennis** (***Preacher***) will write ***Ripclaw*** and ***The Darkness*** for **Top Cow Productions**, starting this summer and fall, respectively. The latter will be drawn by **Marc Silvestri**.
- ***Strangers in Paradise*** going to **Homage Comics**? It's official, as this August sees the release of *Strangers in Paradise* (Volume 3) #1. Creator **Terry Moore** will continue to publish the book under his own Abstract Studio until issue #14, before starting this new full-color series under Jim Lee's Homage imprint.
- Buzz has also heard rumblings about **Jerry Ordway** going to **Image** with an all-new, creator-owned science fiction series called ***Proton***, though neither parties would comment.
- A **Gen^{13}/Generation X** crossover may be in the works, say sources inside Image. No creative teams have been named in the rumor.
- That **Marc Silvestri/Chris Claremont** team-up on a speculated ***Star Trek: X-Men*** one-shot that we reported on last month? The updated scoop is that Silvestri will still be involved, but with **Scott Lobdell**, not Claremont.

THE DREAMER.
THE THUNDER.
THE BAT.
THE EAGLE.
THE ANGEL.

WHOSE WILL BE DONE?

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FOUR-ISSUE PRESTIGE MINISERIES

BEGINNING MAY 1996

DC®

ELSEWORLDS®

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PARTY TIME FOR SUPERBOY

"Superman has the Never-Ending Battle; Superboy is about to discover the Never-Ending Party!" quipped an enthusiastic **Steve Mattsson**, co-writer with **Karl Kesel** on the upcoming ***Superboy and the Ravers*** monthly series from **DC Comics**.

Kesel completes his run on the current *Superboy* title with #30, before joining Mattsson, penciler **Paul Pelletier** and inker **Dan Davis** on the book's spin-off, featuring Superboy's intergalactic adventures with the Ravers. "The Ravers are anybody who can get past the doorman at a dimensional hopping rave called 'The Event Horizon,' " said Mattsson. "The series will focus on the 'Earth clique' at the rave. It will consist of Superboy and a mostly new group of teenage superheroes."

Mattsson was reluctant to reveal details regarding the Ravers' six core members, but he did confirm rumors that one is Sparx, first introduced in 1993's *Adventures of Superman Annual* #5, and another character is a very unexpected Silver Age hero.

According to Mattsson, readers can expect the new series to be tons o' fun. "If you mix Superboy with a scoop of Gen[13] and a pinch of rock 'n' roll, then spray the goo across the DC Universe, you will have a good idea of the mood you'll find in *Superboy and the Ravers*."

Meanwhile, **Ron Marz**, of ***Green Lantern*** and ***Marvel versus DC*** fame, takes over as regular *Superboy* scribe following #31, an issue guest-written by Eddie Berganza.

Superboy's status as a clone will play a pivotal role in the first year's worth of stories. "We want to examine how he feels about being a clone and how that affects him," said writer **Ron Marz**.

Joining him on the book are penciler **Ramon Bernardo**, who is coming off *Justice League Task Force*, and inker **Doug Hazlewood**, who remains on the title.

Their first issue features a jumping-on point for new readers, Marz noted, as Superboy's origin and cast are presented "in a way that feeds into our later storylines."

Issue #33 will tie in with the major fall DC crossover highlighting **Green Lantern**, "In Darkest Night," while Superboy's pal, Dubbilex, has his background and powers examined in #34. Issue #35 kicks off a major story arc, as evil forces plot to capture Superboy and learn how he was made so they can duplicate his powers. That two-part story, Marz said, will lead into "an even more character-based story, where we really start to take Superboy apart. We want to expose him as a singular and unique character and show he's not just a Superman spin-off." ■ *Dean Simakis, Craig Shutt*

Initial sketch of Kaliber, one of the Ravers

Doran Plants SOIL at Image

"Self-publishing is not more important than telling my story," said **Colleen Doran** as she announced that, starting in July, **Image** Comics will be publishing her critically acclaimed series ***A Distant Soil***.

Doran claimed that marketing the sci-fi adventure comic through her company **Aria Press** kept her constantly in debt, and that several distributors were regularly late in paying her the money they collected for each issue. "I can do a quality comic in two months, but I can't get it out," the artist/writer added, noting the many hardships of producing the book herself.

"I'm still semi-self-publishing," Doran noted. Image will produce enough copies of each issue to justify a lower printing cost, which she will still pay. "The printer depends on volume—that's the main reason I'm doing this," she said. Of course, Image's market clout certainly won't hurt.

Erik Larsen approached her when she submitted a piece for Image's upcoming ***The Dark*** mini-series. "Erik thinks it's really good, and that it has appeal to foreign markets." Not only will her comic keep its black-and-white format when it switches over to Larsen's studio with issue #15, but "there are absolutely no story restrictions. I'll have total creative freedom.

"The only people who discouraged me were not self-publishers," laughed Doran, who joins **Jeff Smith** (***Bone***, now at Image) and **Teri S. Wood** (***Wandering Star***, now at Sirius) in creating a new trend. She mentioned that Aria will continue to distribute *ADS* back issues and other products.

"I'm not doing this to get rich," Doran said. "I just would like to tell my story, and keep a roof over my head while doing so." ■ *Marc Wilkofsky*

HEY!

Yeah, we know it's nowhere *near* Halloween, but that don't mean squat. The fifth annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest is up and running, and we want you to get off yer duff and enter! C'mon, where else can you dress up like your favorite character and show all of comicdom what a giant idiot you are? And if we pick you as our Grand Prize Winner, you'll walk off with a prize so freakin' huge we can't even announce it till next issue. But trust us, it's really, really big. Kinda like Cuba. There'll be some Runner-Up prizes, too, but they'll suck compared to the Grand Prize.

So anyway, here's what you gotta do:

1) Dress up like anyone (or anything) you want—comic book character, video game character, something out of a book or movie, whatever (the more original your getup, the better your chances of winning).

2) The actual costume itself must be HOMEMADE, but you can add store-bought items to accent your outfit. For example, you can't go out and buy a Spidey mask for your Spider-Man costume, but you can use a toy gun for your Punisher costume, *comprende*?

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will NOT be accepted!), then write your name, age, full address, phone number and name of the character you're dressed up as on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo (don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses in case some pictures suck. And remember that magic five-letter word: "focus."

4) To be eligible to win, **we must receive your photo by September 3, 1996**, so you'd better move your butt!

Send your entry to:
Costume Contest 5
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Last year's winners, Scott Crawford and his friends (wearing those awesome X-Men costumes), won an Aiwa stereo system (with a CD player an' stuff), horror movie video tapes, CD horror movie soundtracks and a grave full o' horror novels!

More details next issue!

So don't be a sap! Dress up like an idiot today!

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Comic Veteran Jack Abel Dies at 68

Veteran penciler, inker and production artist **Jack Abel** died March 6, after suffering a heart attack while working as a proofreader at the office of **Marvel Comics**. He was 68.

Editor Kelly Corvese attempted CPR, but Abel was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. Abel was best known for his work, both penciling and inking, on DC's war comics of the 1950s and '60s, notably the Captain Storm feature in ***Our Fighting Forces***, and later for inking Gene Colan's pencils on Marvel's **Iron Man** stories in ***Tales of Suspense***, where both began working under pseudonyms: Colan was "Adam Austin," Abel was "Gary Michaels."

Along the way, Abel inked many well remembered series of the time, including a stint over Curt Swan's pencils on the **Legion of Super-Heroes** in ***Adventure Comics***.

More recently, Abel had joined Marvel's production department and, following a pair of strokes, had limited himself to proofreading. At Marvel, and in a previous berth on staff at Neal Adams' Continuity Studios, Abel ingratiated himself to newcomers and old-timers alike, according to writer/artist **Walt Simonson**.

"Jack took all the newcomers to comics at face value. He was the same with everybody—the guys his age in the business, the young punks, anybody," Simonson told *Wizard*. "Jack was a wonderful curmudgeon and I already miss not having that curmudgeon quality available to puncture some of the balloons around in the business." ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

Copperfield Makes Batmobile Disappear

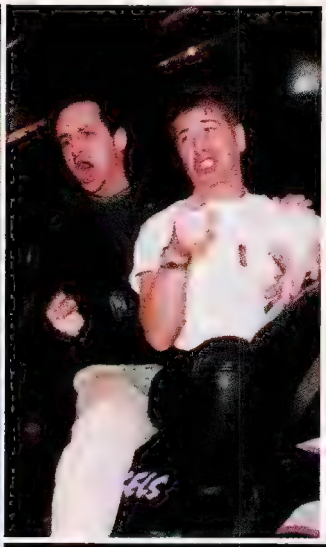
David Copperfield, master illusionist and fiancee of model **Claudia Schiffer**, is now the proud owner of the Batmobile.

Copperfield was the winning bidder when one of the working models of the car from the first "Batman" movie was auctioned in Los Angeles in March. He paid a reported $189,500 to the Butterfield & Butterfield auction house for the sleek black specialty car.

Copperfield bid by phone, remaining anonymous during the auction, and it was originally thought the Batmobile had been acquired by one of the burgeoning number of theme restaurants and museums that eagerly seek out such memorabilia.

Then, several days after the auction, gossip columnist Liz Smith reported that Copperfield had driven away with the Batmobile, and *Time* later confirmed the sale. "I live in a Batcave now," the illusionist told *Time*, "so I might as well have a Batmobile." ■ *PDO*

Comic relief: Heidi MacDonald, Comics Editor for *Disney Adventures Magazine*, proudly gets pied by DC Comics Executive Editor Mike Carlin at Friends of Lulu's first "Big Apple Pie Contest" (pictured at right). Three of her competitors included Marvel Executive Editor Mark Gruenwald and DC editor Kevin Dooley (center of group picture). All the whipped cream pies were used up when Gruenwald started a free-for-all by hitting runner-up Carlin. The funds went to Friends of Lulu (a national organization aimed at getting more girls and women involved in comics), which might stage another piefest next year.



Hog Wild: Billy Tucci unveiled his *Atomik Angels* series with a launch party at the USS Intrepid in New York City last February. Over 500 attendees witnessed a display of 20 Kawasaki racing motorcycles like the ones featured in the series, including Tucci's own bike. Tucci, pictured at left with *Bone* creator Jeff Smith, and below, with fellow *Angels* creator Peter Gutierrez, center, and Nelson Ascencio, right, urged guests to "rock the boat," and they did, all night long.

company updates

ABSTRACT STUDIO

June's *Strangers in Paradise* #13 closes out the four-issue story arc in a chaotic finale that resolves the question of who ends up with whom in regards to all the main characters....Coming in July is an intriguing *Molly and Poo* one-shot collecting all the previous Molly and Poo letters (from *SiP*) as well as some new ones and new art.

AC COMICS

Femforce #95 has a photo cover with Nightveil.

ACCLAIM COMICS

Due out in June is the *X-O Manowar/Iron Man* crossover book, which ties into the Marvel-released *Iron Man/X-O* book. The Acclaim book is by Fabian Nicieza and Andy Smith, while the Marvel book is by Nicieza and Tom Grindberg.

BLACKOUT COMICS

In June, the *Hari Kari: Violated* CD-ROM bundle ships. The $19.95 package features a CD, a poster and a prism-foil-stamped and autographed comic.

BONGO COMICS

This year's *Treehouse of Horror*, shipping in October, will contain stories from Peter Bagge and Paul Dini....Coming in June is *Simpsons Comics Simpsorama*, a 128-page trade paperback reprinting *Simpsons* #11-#14 and offering tons of nifty bonus pages, all for just $10.95.

BROADWAY COMICS

June's *Makeshift* #1 starts a six-part mini-series starring a rough, male NYC cop who suddenly gains powers, but is turned into a woman in the process! It ships in June.

CALIBER PRESS

In June, Mike Deodato Jr. and Mike Deodato Sr. join forces on *Deodato Comics: Fallout 3000* #1, which was originally presented in Brazil. Deodato Jr. creates an all-new cover for this issue....Caliber's new anthology series *Calibrations* will cost only 99 cents. The first issue, shipping in June, features works by Warren Ellis, Jill Thompson and others.

CHAOS! COMICS

Lady Death: The Odyssey #4, shipping in June, marks the debut of a new costume for the ravishing Diva of Death, as Lady Death gives up her warrior ways and finds peace in a quiet, medieval realm....In June, you can get a 22" x 34" Evil Ernie & Lady Death poster ($5.95) by Steven Hughes or a Purgatori poster ($5.95) of the same size by Jim Balent....The *Lady Death: Between Heaven and Hell* trade paperback reprints last year's mini-series. Look for it in June....*Lady Death: The Odyssey* #1/2 will be an exclusive offering available through *Wizard* #60. This special issue is the epilogue to the *Odyssey* mini series by Brian Pulido, Steven Hughes and Jason Jensen.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

At July's San Diego Comic Con, the CBLDF will be sponsoring several panels and discussion groups on censorship in comics. Frank Miller will give a keynote address on July 2....Peter David and Dave Sim will attend the Defense Con, produced by Chaos! Comics at the Oklahoma Fairgrounds on May 11-12 to benefit the Fund.

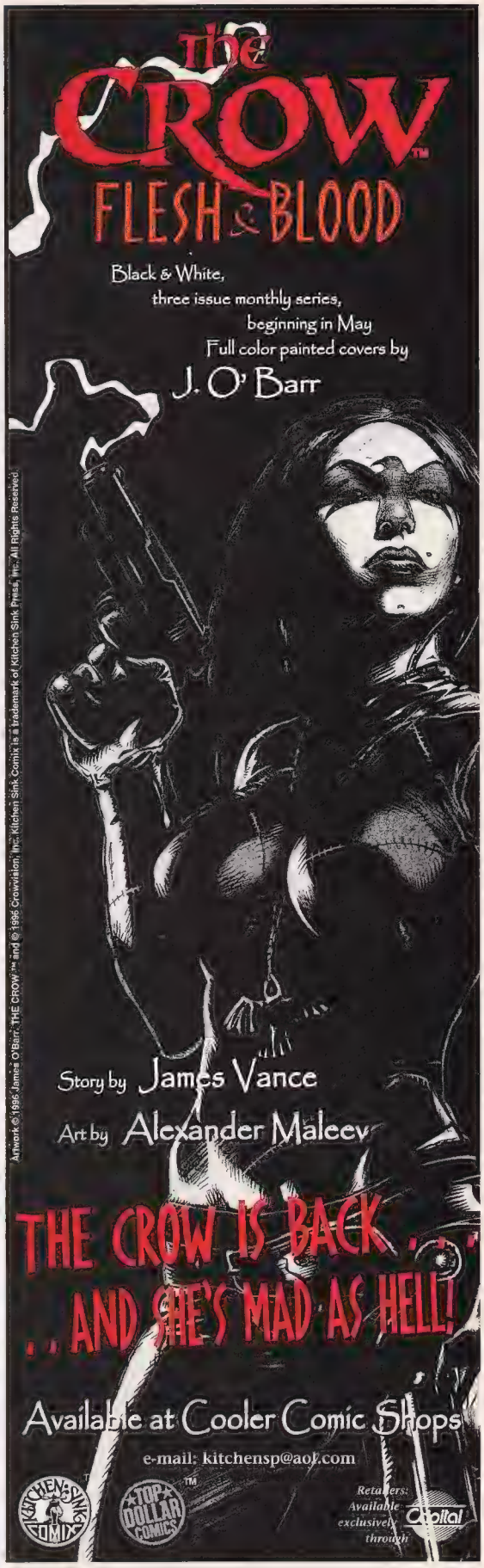
CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT

Crusade releases its first-ever full-chromium poster in June as the cover from *Shi: The Way of the Warrior* #5 is available as a 19" x 27" poster ($24.95 suggested retail).

DARK HORSE COMICS

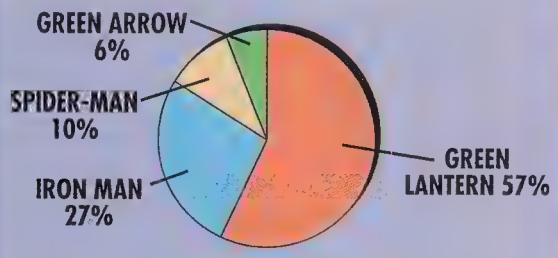
Age of Reptiles: The Hunt, the sequel to 1994's *Age of Reptiles* mini-series, begins in June. This silent adventure pits dinosaur vs. dinosaur, as "survival of the fittest" is never more accurate. Great story and art, by series originator Ricardo Delgado....*Sin City: The Big Fat Kill* paperback is due out in June, as is the *Superman vs. Aliens* paperback collecting the crossover mini-series.

continued on page 26



Question of the Month

Seeing as how so many old-time characters have been killed/changed/retired/rewritten like crazy in recent times, we thought we'd get your opinions on the whole thing. **Hal Jordan** (Green Lantern) went nuts, killed lots o' people and is now a villain called Parallax, while **Kyle Rayner** is the new GL. **Iron Man** was killed and replaced with a younger version of himself. **Green Arrow** was killed and replaced by his illegitimate son. And, of course, there's **Spider-Man** who was replaced by a clone who wasn't a clone (you get the picture) and is now "really" Ben Reilly. So we used our "Wizard World" forum on America Online to ask which of the following recent **character overhauls** you approve of the most: Green Lantern, Iron Man, Green Arrow or Spider-Man?



We also asked the following intriguing character-revamp questions:

• If a company is replacing the secret identity of a superhero, would you prefer that they kill him **(47%)**, they retire him **(41%)** or just turn him evil **(12%)**?

• With the surge of superhero revamps in recent years, do you believe: they've done a grave disservice to the "older" heroes they replaced **(32%)**, they're a cop-out and are used as marketing gimmicks **(30%)**, they are necessary to shake things up **(23%)** or they've made it easier for new readers to jump on **(15%)**?

• If you could kill and replace any one comic book character who would it be? Characters with the most votes for revamping included Spider-Man (people wanted Peter Parker back the way he was), Batman, Captain America and Wolverine. Some other interesting ones were Iron Fist, Juggernaut, Lobo, Vampirella (*without* her skimpy outfit), Silver Surfer, Galactus, Human Torch and Professor X (replaced by Magneto—now where have we heard that one before?). ■ *Sorrell Booke*

Ooops!

A production error in *Wizard* #57's "How to Make a Homemade Hero" led to the feature not showing the final completed action figure of Captain America. So, with apologies to writer/sculptor Chris Spaseff (who did an awesome job), here it is...

company updates

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DC COMICS

Look for a *Batman: Gotham* mini-poster in Issue #74, compiling the recent storyline that ran through the Bat-titles. ... *Legends of Justice* is expected to be a series starring the new JLA, formatted like *Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight* with rotating creative teams. ... James Robinson will be writing the four-issue *The Shade* mini-series, starring the *Starman* villain. Each issue will be done by different artists, including Gene Ha, J.H. Williams, Brett Blevins and Michael Zulli. ... Norm Breyfogle (*Prime*) will be contributing art on a *Robin Back to School Special* coming out in summer's end. ... Supergirl comes back this summer in a new series by Peter David and Gary Frank. You too can win a walk-on appearance in Superman's dreams through a contest in *Wizard* #60.

ENTITY COMICS

Entity's four-issue adaptation of the hit 1994 movie *Stargate* begins in May, with two versions: a standard $2.95 issue, and a special edition, which offers a foil-embossed photo cover and behind-the-scenes photos and facts, for $3.50. The mini-series will lead into a series featuring new stories and tying in with the upcoming TV show, due out later this year.

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Home Movies Library #1 is a special giant-size edition weighing in at 13" by 18". Wood/artist Chris Ware gives Jimmy Corrigan a break and focuses on the adventures of Rocket Sam and Big Ted. Also, Ware's zany artwork was seen in the Oscar preview issue of *Entertainment Weekly* (and was pretty damn funny, at that). Pick it up if you can, eh? Good.

FIREMAN PRESS

Sharpen those pencils! The winner of a contest in *Wizard* #60 will get their pin-up art published in a future issue of *Sand: The Disposable Assassin*.

HARRIS COMICS

May features two versions of *Vampirella Strikes* #1. The first limited-edition has a run of only 5,000, features an alternate photo cover and comes polybagged with a rare photo promo card from Topps' *Vampirella Gallery* card set. Cover price: $4.95. The second version is a limited edition autographed comic, signed by artist Ed McGuinness, for $14.95.

IMAGE COMICS

• CARTOON BOOKS

Now you can play cards with your favorite characters from *Bone*! All the regulars, including Fone Bone, Phoney, Smiley, Gran'ma Ben, Thorn and Red the Bug will be appearing on the set of Bone playing cards shipping this June. All the face cards will have variations of those familiar faces. ... The next Bone poster ships in July, and features the Image version of *Bone* #2's cover.

• EXTREME STUDIOS

The Marvel/Image crossovers kick off in June with *Bedlam: Wolverine* ($4.95) by Jim Valentino and Chap Yaep, as a mysterious plane crash entangles the two characters in the deadly jungle hidden underneath the icy mountains of the Northern polar continent. *Prophet/Cable* ($4.95) pairs Chris Dixon and Rob Liefeld as Prophet and Cable are thrust into the world of the 40th Century Earth.

• TODD MCFARLANE PRODUCTIONS

Spawn #50, due this May, kicks off "Spawn Month" as Todd McFarlane returns to the artist and story (pencils and inks), chronicling Spawn's descent into Hell. The book's story is now Greg Capullo's pencils and McFarlane on inks as Spawn gets a new-looked. Designed by McFarlane, the new Spawn took McFarlane over a year to design and has been variously described as a spokesperson Beau Smith said "McFarlane kept the sketches of the new Spawn with him at all times. None of us in the office have even seen it yet." Also, for every 50 copies of #50 ordered, retailers will receive a limited edition (estimated at 1,000) Spawn action figure featuring the new Spawn face. This figure will not be available anywhere else. ... Also scheduled for Spawn Month: the second Spawn trade paperback reprinting Spawn #8-#9 and #13 along with the Spawn/Angela: Heaven and Hell poster by Greg Capullo.

• TOP COW PRODUCTIONS

The *Witchblade Collection Edition—Volume 1* collects the first two issues of the sold-out series, with a new cover by Mike Turner.

• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

Mid-July sees the launch of the new *Grifter* series by writer Steven Grant and artists

continued on page 28

Vampirella: Death & Destruction®

The END is Near!

Conner
Palmiotti
Jusko

Sniegoski
C. Golden
A. Hughes

3 Issue mini-series premiering in July
with an awesome Billy Tucci cover!

(Here's a sneak peak.)

HARRIS COMICS

NEWS BITES

Rob Hanes Returns

WCG Comics publisher **Randy Reynaldo**, writer and artist of ***Adventure Strip Digest*** and its lead feature, "**Rob Hanes**," is planning some changes to the acclaimed work, including greater continuity between issues and an attempt to portray his globe-trotting investigator hero as more of a modern hero. "I want to make sure that readers know that Rob Hanes is a character that they can identify with," Reynaldo said. ■ *PDO*

Image, Cerebus Exhibits at Words & Pictures

The works of **Image** founders **Jim Lee**, **Rob Liefeld**, **Erik Larsen**, **Marc Silvestri**, **Todd McFarlane**, **Whilce Portacio** and **Jim Valentino** will grace the walls of the third-floor galleries of Northampton, Massachusetts' **Words & Pictures Museum** through May 5. The exhibit includes previews of projects that have not yet seen print. Also, the complete "Minds" story arc from ***Cerebus*** (reprinting *Cerebus* #187-#200) is going to be on display from June 20 through August 18. With some 280-pages of original art, creator **Dave Sim** promises that it's "three floors of rockin' fun!" Call the museum at (413) 586-8545 for more information. ■ *PDO, AK*

Alan Moore Joins the Extreme Team

Writer **Alan Moore** joins the **Extreme** team in August, taking over the reigns of Image's second-longest running title, ***Supreme***, effective issue #41.

"Sometime ago, somebody decided to sweep all of the junk and absurdity out of the superhero closet and somehow, all the awe and wonder went with it," said Moore. "With *Supreme*, I intend to sweep all that marvelous junk back in!"

Moore has had writing stints on ***Watchmen***, ***Swamp Thing***, ***From Hell***, ***Violator*** and ***WildC.A.T.s***.

"People who love what Alan's been doing with *WildC.A.T.s* had better get geared up for this," said Extreme President **Rob Liefeld**. ■ *Glenn Haight*

Acclaim Archivist Killed in Car Crash

Seaborn Adamson, an archivist at **Acclaim Comics**, tragically died as the result of a car accident near his Georgia home on Jan. 29. He is survived by a wife and daughter. ■ *John B. Lacey*

BYTE THIS!

The colorful and controversial **John Byrne** meets fans on May 23 at 8:00-8:45 p.m. (EST) in "Wizard World" on America Online.

Comic's golden-boy scribe **Mark Waid** also gets digitally conversational with "Wizard World" users on June 13 from 8:00-8:45 p.m. (EST).

Wanna be in comics? Acclaim Comics writer/artist **Mark Moretti** hosts "Wizard World" 's "Breaking In" chatroom every other Thursday @ 8:00-9:00 p.m. (EST). Mark's professional guests to be announced.

"Wizard World" 's Manga/Anime club includes professionals from Central Park Media, Manga Entertainment and several other companies. Don't miss the great downloadable pictures in their area.

To hook up to "Wizard World" on America Online, call 800-754-4400. They'll send you free software and 10 hours free online. Keyword: Wizard. ■ *Buddy Scalera*

company updates

continued from page 26

Melvin Rubi. Shipping in July is *Brass* #1, first seen in ads over three years ago. Late July sees *Deathblow* #0 hitting the shelves, wrapping up the story arc never completed from the 1993 *Darker Image* issue. Sporting a new cover and never-before-seen interior comic pages by Jim Lee, this puppy is written by Brandon Choi and Lee with additional art by Trevor Scott. July'll see a Backlash/Spider-Man crossover with Venom and Pike as the villains. Oh, and the "evil Gen" book, *Deviants*, has been postponed till August.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS

The first female Crow gets her revenge on her murderers in June's *The Crow: Flesh & Blood* #2.

LIGHTNING COMICS

June's *Creed* #3 contains the first-ever Creed chromium card (produced by Krome Productions), while an ongoing series launches this September.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

June's *Razor: Burn* trade paperback collects *Razor: Burn* #1-#5 and *Razor* #1/2, featuring the heroine's death and the intro of Poizon.

MAXIMUM PRESS

The Six Million Dollar Man and the Bionic Woman make their Maximum Press debut in *Asylum* #6, running your way in June.

MARVEL COMICS

Writer Mark Waid's last issue on *Captain America* will be #454, and he will do issues #400-#402 of *Avengers*. The new Avengers creative team, under Rob Liefeld, will be Jim Valentino writing, Liefeld on breakdowns and George Pérez (an *Avengers* vet) doing finished art. The new Cap team will be Chuck Dixon and Liefeld. Carlos Pacheco (*Excalibur*) debuts new costumes for the Fantastic Four in *FF* #415. Hulk joins forces with Onslaught in *Incredible Hulk* #444. Get ahold of *Spider-Man's Greatest Team-Ups*, a 176-page trade paperback ($16.95) with guest appearances by the Hulk, Daredevil and the Avengers. *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* #12 (still 99 cents!) reveals the secrets of Betty Brant as she analyzes her relationship with Peter Parker—and Spidey. Round One of the X-Men/Onslaught fight happens in *Onslaught: X-Men* #1 by Scott Lobdell and Mark Waid, with art by Adam Kubert.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

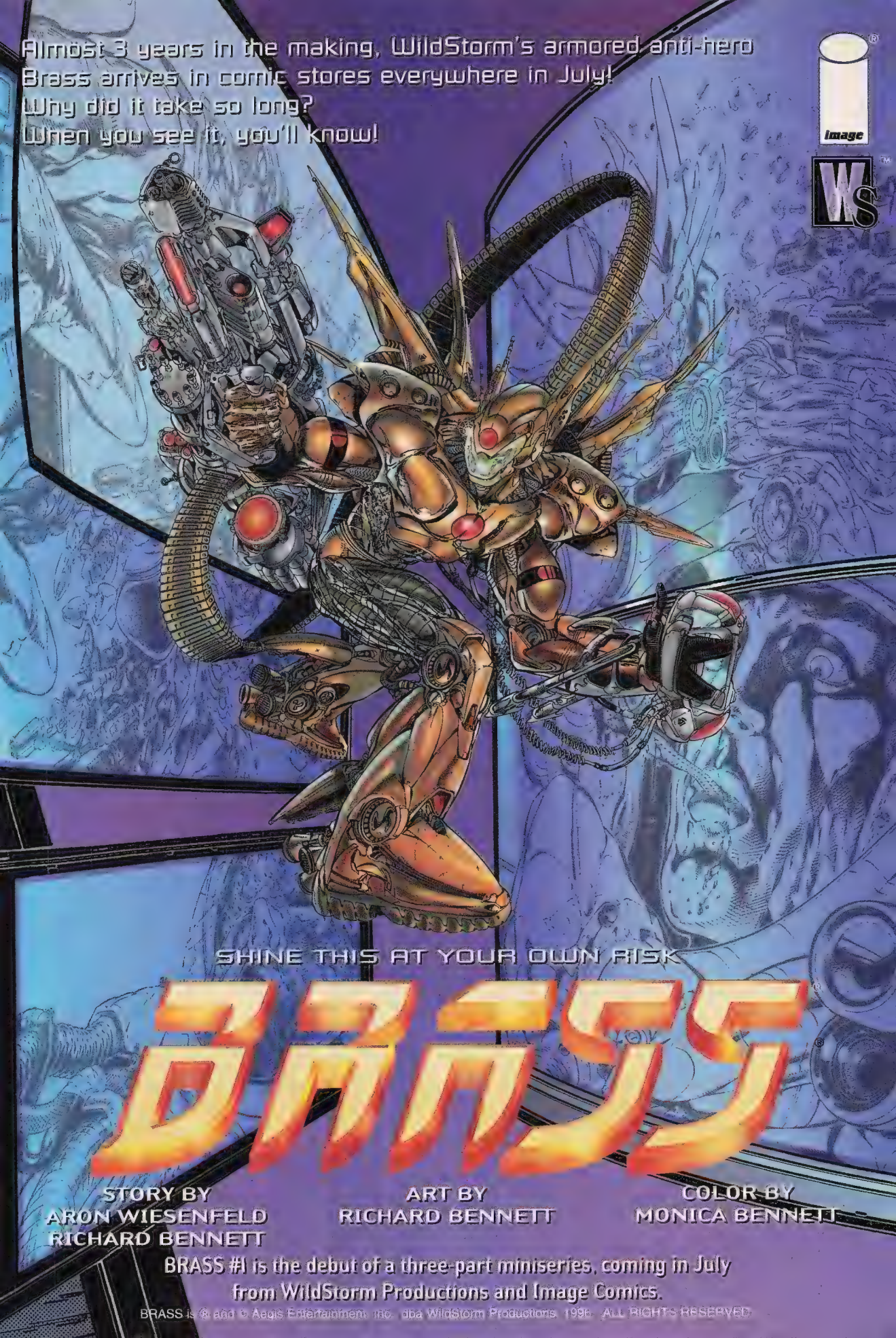
A poster is out in May featuring cover art from the *Poison Elves: Requiem for an Elf* paperback. Also, *Poison Elves: Traumatic Dogs*, a trade paperback reprinting *Lusiphur* #7-#12, ships in June. Check out *Halo: An Angel's Story*, a four-issue mini-series beginning in April. The finished art was done in woodcut. May begins Sirius' run on Teri Wood's *Wandering Star* with #12. The series will now be monthly. *Wizard* #59 will contain an exclusive *Down* #1/2 offer. The comic will feature art by Joseph Michael Linsner and Tom Artis, with a painted cover by Linsner.

TOPPS COMICS

Hercules: The Legendary Journeys #1 kicks off an all-new monthly series in June. It's by Roy Thomas, Jeff Butler and Steve Montano. Keep yer eyes peeled for the Michael Golden cover. Look for the *Mars Attacks Baseball Special* #1 in June, which pits Earth against Mars in a game of baseball (No joke!).

SMALL PRESS REPORT

James Hudnall is self-publishing his *ESPers* series, formerly published by Eclipse and Epic Comics, starting in April through his Halloween Comics line. It will be a black-and-white bimonthly book at $2.95 a pop. One Shot Press is compiling a special jam wraparound cover—featuring as many characters of independent creators and small press publishers as possible—for October's *Strictly Independent!* #4. The company will donate the cover art to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, which will auction it off as a fundraiser.


Almost 3 years in the making, WildStorm's armored anti-hero
Brass arrives in comic stores everywhere in July!
Why did it take so long?
When you see it, you'll know!
image
WS
SHINE THIS AT YOUR OWN RISK
BRASS
STORY BY
ARON WIESENFELD
RICHARD BENNETT
ART BY
RICHARD BENNETT
COLOR BY
MONICA BENNETT
BRASS #1 is the debut of a three-part miniseries, coming in July
from WildStorm Productions and Image Comics.
BRASS is ® and © Aegis Entertainment, Inc., dba WildStorm Productions, 1996. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Pamela Anderson insists she's a lot like her Barb Wire character: wise, wicked and very bitter

by Marc Shapiro

High Wire

Pamela Anderson has a lot in common with Barb Wire. The closest tie to that comic book crime fighter currently resides on her left biceps.

"Look at this," says Anderson as she twists her arm around to expose an intricate barbed wire tattoo. "They were going to paint this on me everyday for the movie but I had a tattoo artist sketch it on me. I wore it around for half a day and everybody loved it—and I loved it—so I decided I was going to go ahead and get a real tattoo. It took four and a half hours and, well...it's pretty feminine for barbed wire."

The tattoo is not the only thing the "Baywatch" babe is offering up to make her portrayal of Barb Wire as realistic a comic book-to-film workout as the law allows. Despite the trauma of a mid-filming pregnancy and miscarriage, Anderson has proven her mettle by literally throwing herself into Barb Wire's action parade. Yes, it's Anderson kicking major league butt with martial arts moves, firing automatic weapons and riding motorcycles at top speed.

"In fact, the only thing my stunt double has done so far is jump over a table and land on her back. I've done all the fight sequences and a lot of the stunts myself. And a big part of that has been out of necessity. It's hard to get stunt doubles because the outfit I'm wearing cinches my waist down to about 17 inches. You try getting a Stallone or Schwarzenegger to do their own stunts in a 17-inch corset and a pair of stiletto heels," she laughs.

But Anderson concedes that the "Barb Wire" action has not been all fun and games. The day a helicopter took off with Anderson hanging from it brings a quick shudder to the actress.

"There was all this fire and noise. And I'm afraid of heights, so I kind of freaked out. But I hung in there [literally] and got through it."

"Barb Wire," directed by David Hogan from a Chuck Pfarrer script, is quite literally the Dark Horse comic book in the cinematic flesh. The story finds Barb Wire, the owner of The Hammerhead Bar and Grill and part-time bounty hunter, put aside her more mercenary tendencies in favor of helping to free a futuristic civil war resistance figure. Besides Anderson's gun-toting, chopper-riding Barb, the cast includes Udo Kier ("Andy

Opposite: Anderson as Barb Wire. Below: Barb hangin' out with the guys.

Coming up Aces

Barb Wire: Ace of Spades, an original four-issue mini-series from the mind of Barb Wire creator Chris Warner, will debut in May from the folks at Dark Horse.

The book, written and drawn by Warner and inked by Tim Bradstreet, will be coming out in conjunction with the release of the "Barb Wire" film but, according to Warner, has nothing to do with the movie (which will also be adapted in a Dark Horse one–shot).

"The comic will be closer to the original series than it is to the movie," he says. "The movie takes place in its own separate world in the future. The comic pretty much takes place in equal time to where the last series left off."

The Ace of Spades storyline focuses on a city-wide gang truce in Steel Harbor that has turned Barb's Hammerhead Bar into the new hot spot. Barb, consequently, has given up bounty hunting to make a go of the club. But things get dicey when gang members begin to turn up dead at the hands of a mysterious costumed woman named Death Card. Mysterious, because in the previous *Barb Wire* series, Death Card was a man. When the dust settles, all fingers are pointing at Barb as the killer.

"As the series goes on, the situations get real explosive as the city threatens to revert back to a gang war," continues Warner. "Barb is faced with having to solve the mystery of Death Card, clear her name and keep the whole city from going up in flames."

Warner claims that a change in Barb Wire's costume, more closely reflecting the movie costume, is the main change in *Ace of Spades*. "This series is a lot closer to my original vision of the character. It's still the same environment and the same supporting cast. I'm turning a few things on their heads and reestablishing a few things. It's going to be very action packed."

Warner, in regards to the "Barb Wire" movie, says, "What I've seen of it I liked. Pamela [Anderson] is pretty amazing. She's as close to the comic book as I could have ever hoped for. Pamela's a real rocker. She's real intense."

Warner, who has not "gotten my hands dirty" on the *Barb Wire* series since originating the character in 1993's *Comics' Greatest World* mini-series, has mixed feelings about how *Barb Wire* has fared in other hands. "I think the people who worked on the series did a good job, but when you create this stuff and develop the environment, you tend to have a pretty clear vision of how everything should go and function. So it's been pretty frustrating to sit back and watch the series not quite hit the mark. In all fairness, there were several artist changes on the book and so it was hard to get any real momentum going. I also felt there were some questionable calls in terms of the kinds of teams that were put together on the book. I just don't think that everyone who worked on those books was right for those books."

But, with *Barb Wire: Ace of Spades*, Warner sees creative redemption on the horizon. "It's been fun to get back into it. And if *Ace of Spades* and the 'Barb Wire' movie do real well, there's no doubt in my mind that there will be another series." ■ *MS*

Warhol's Frankenstein" and "Dracula") as Curly, the film's comic relief, Jack Noseworthy ("Dead At 21") as Barb's blind brother Charlie, and a support team that includes the colorful likes of Tone Loc, Steve Railsback, Temeura Morrison and Victoria Powell. "Barb Wire," due out in May courtesy of Gramercy Pictures, is being produced by Dark Horse honchos Mike Richardson and Todd Moyer, and Brad Wyman.

The "Barb Wire" odyssey began late in 1994 when Moyer and Richardson were chomping at the bit to get their recent association with Polygram Pictures off to a flying start. Enter Brad Wyman with a centerfold of Pamela Anderson and the proclamation that "This is Barb Wire!" The two Dark Horse types were initially reluctant, having visions of their chopper chick becoming B-movie fodder. But Wyman persisted and came back with the money necessary to finance two $4 million "Barb Wire" movies that would be shot back to back in Romania. Moyer and Richardson continued to balk at what appeared to be a quick-and-dirty move but took the low ball bid to Polygram anyway.

They were knocked on their collective butts when the head of Polygram offered to put up $10 million out of his company's coffers if they could deliver Anderson. Following what Moyer describes as "a brutal Christmas and New Year" negotiating session with Anderson's agent, the movie was greenlighted in January '95.

Gen13's J. Scott Campbell did this take on Dark Horse's number one Bad Girl

And for Anderson, who during the course of her career has fielded more than her share of left field offers, the opportunity to strap on strange costumes and big guns was right up her alley. "I've got a lot of crazy offers over the years that I wasn't interested in. But when I read the *Barb Wire* comics, I said, 'Nobody can play this character but me.' People don't realize that I do have an edge they haven't seen yet and 'Barb Wire' is giving me the opportunity to give a lot of nasty sideways glances. She's mysterious and mischievous. She's a lot like me. I'm always in trouble and doing things sideways and that's how Barb is. Wise, wicked and very bitter."

And, offers the actress with a chuckle, it's giving her the opportunity to—at least temporarily—beach her blonde bimbo role in "Baywatch" for a tougher line.

"C.J. is a lot more lighthearted than Barb Wire. She's got that slightly mystical side to her. But I think Barb is actually closer to my true character than anything I've ever done before. There's an evil, twisted, dark side inside me that I'm finally getting to explore with this character. Needless to say, that streak has never shown up on 'Baywatch.' But maybe it should. C.J. could just turn into this evil, tattooed, pregnant woman all of a sudden," roars the actress.

And, with a definite look of discomfort, Anderson chronicles what she considers the toughest element of her "Barb Wire" experience. "The clothes, the costumes and the makeup. It was hell! I probably have 10 completely different looks in this film. The prostitute costume was the worst! I had to wear this huge hair with fishnets and high boots and red lips. I had to wear that costume for two weeks and I literally couldn't stand myself."

But what Anderson *can* stand is that "Barb Wire" won't be a blood-drenched epic. "There's a lot of gunfights, fight scenes and craziness but it's so cartoonish and comic book-like that I wouldn't really consider what we're doing as violent. There's no blood. It's just a lot of diving, rolling, kicking and shooting at each other. And, as far as the shooting goes, for the most part, everybody keeps missing."

Pamela Anderson's real life, including a lengthy string of romances and the whirlwind courtship and marriage to Mötley Crüe drummer Tommy Lee, is not too far removed from a typical *Barb Wire* adventure. Anderson laughs as she agrees with that notion.

"My normal day is complete chaos," she roars. "It's been difficult and insane the way my career and life have gone. Believe it or not, I'm actually starting to think about simplifying my life. Just as soon as I finish kicking ass!" W

Marc Shapiro, who wrote about the small press on page 64, is the author of The Official Baywatch Scrapbook *from Berkley Publishing, due out this summer.*

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GARFIELD GAMES

Wizard casts the Watchmen movie!

Casting Call 16

The best of the best. That's what can be said of *Watchmen*, the greatest comic book series ever produced, written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Dave Gibbons, and released from 1986 to 1987. Though we run the risk of alienating *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* purists, *Watchmen* was a watershed event in comics history. It proved that comic books aren't just kiddie fodder and can offer a true literary experience (hey, it had foreshadowing, irony, symbolism, flashbacks and a whole ton of stuff that makes up classic literature).

Given a real world setting, *Watchmen* set a new standard of flawless characterization, masterful dialogue and a tense plot progression building towards an explosive climax. It's a murder mystery, a world domination epic and a straight superhero story. It has it all. So much so that it takes three or four readings to grasp all the subtleties of Gibbons' art alone.

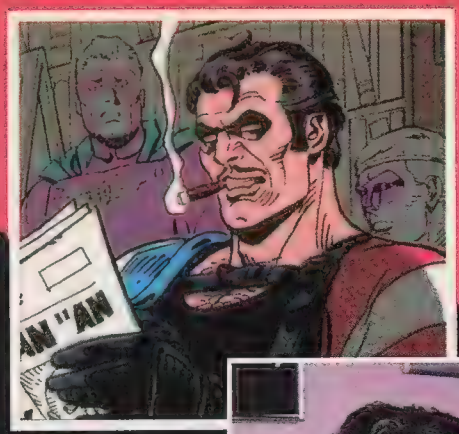
And since they've been talking about a movie for almost 10 years now, we thought we'd cast our own *Watchmen* flick, just for the heck of it. Here's what we came up with...

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

All photos: Everett Collection unless otherwise noted.

RORSCHACH

David Caruso ("NYPD Blue," "Kiss of Death") has shown that he can be evil when he has to. And with his red hair, he would fit this part perfectly.

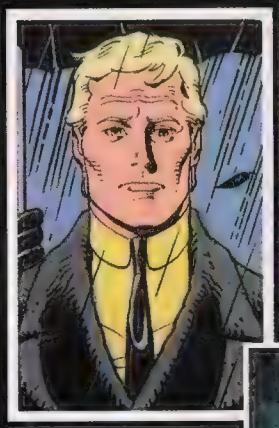


NITE OWL

For this part we needed someone kind of dumpy, but still able to give the bad guys a scare; that's why we chose William Hurt ("Broadcast News," "Altered States"). He's got the floppy hair and everything.

THE COMEDIAN

Dennis Farina ("Crime Story") would kick butt as this commie-smashin' warrior. He's got that I-can-kick-anyone's-ass-anytime-anyplace look about him.

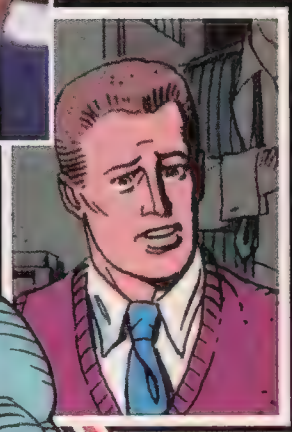


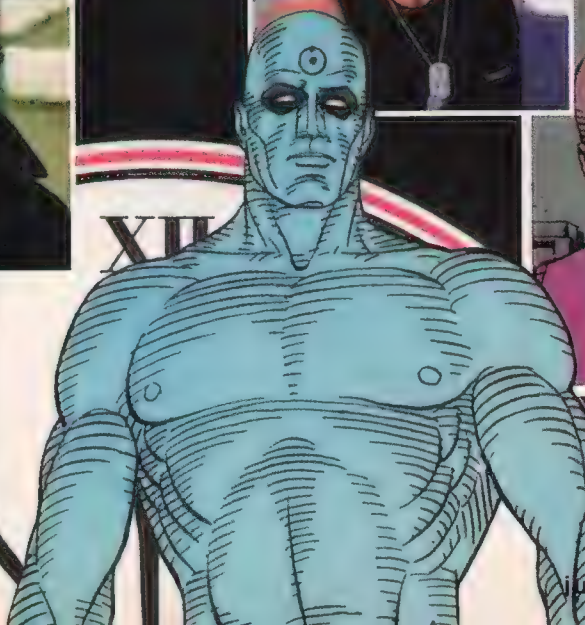
OZYMANDIAS

Robert Redford ("Indecent Proposal," "Up Close and Personal") has shown that he can be charming, as well as cold and calculating. That's why we think he'd make a fabulous Ozymandias.

DR. MANHATTAN

For the role of the godlike Dr. Manhattan, we needed someone who's pretty darn big and can still be a prototypical good guy. David James Elliott ("JAG") is our man.



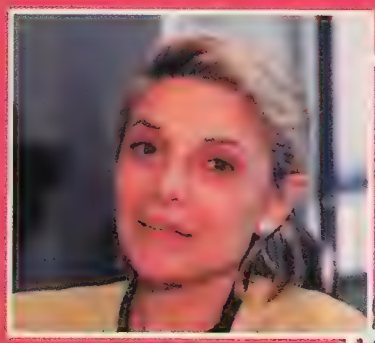


SILK SPECTRE

Laurie Juspeczyk, the sexy daughter of the original Silk Spectre, would be portrayed beautifully by Demi Moore ("Disclosure," "Striptease").

MOLOCH

For this former evil magician, Roddy McDowall ("Planet of the Apes," "Overboard") is a fine pick.



SALLY JUPITER

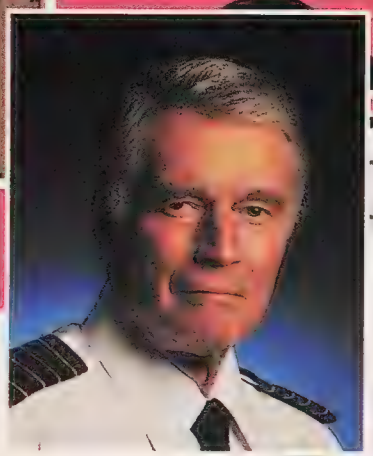
With a little makeup, we're sure Anne Bancroft ("Malice," "Home for the Holidays") would look incredible as the original Silk Spectre.

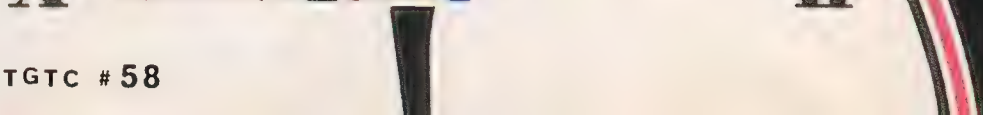
Only the best for the best, right? Unfortunately, you can never really capture *Watchmen* on film, unless you have four or five hours to spend watching it. But hey, with longer films like "Braveheart," "Casino" and "Nixon" on the rise, maybe there's a chance that we can someday see a Watchmen movie done right. "Who watches the Watchmen?" you ask. Who knows—it could be you.

The **Wizard** *staff read* **Watchmen** *for the 10 bazillionth time while prepping for this feature.*

HOLLIS MASON

Charlton Heston ("Planet of the Apes") has the voice, the experience and the stature to carry off the part of the first Nite Owl.





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HOW TO SPOT A COMIC GEEK

What you need to know to avoid the fifth horseman of the apocalypse

TAPED GLASSES

Spend money to repair 'em or save up for that full-color poster with Lady Death skipping rope? Hmmm…

SUPERHERO CAP

Hey, why bother washing your hair when you can hide it?

COMIC T-SHIRT

Nothing, and we mean *nothing*, impresses a babe like a fella sporting a Batman T-shirt. No, sir.

THE GUT

Full of McGoodness.

FLANNEL

In fact, that Batman T-shirt's so impressive, why ever wear anything else? Just play it smart and cover up any bodily excretion stains.

HOME ENEMA KIT

Other than watching "X-Files," the only really fun thing to do on a Friday night.

PANTS ABOUT ANKLES
Who can't resist pantsing a helpless fat kid while he's snacking on cheese?

JINGLY KEYCHAIN
You don't wanna get locked out of your parents' house. (You do still live at home, don't you?)

NOVELTY BAND-AID
Hey, quit picking at it or it'll never heal!

CHEESE
Individually wrapped for your luke-warm snacking pleasure.

CASE OF OXY 10
When you've squeezed 'em dry, finish the job and Oxy-cute 'em!

COMIC TROLLEY
Since having friends is clearly out of the question, bring along your entire collection for company!

PRIMATENE MIST
For when a pretty girl passes you in the street or some overly exciting thing enters your life.

KNAPSACK OF COMICS
Much more entertaining than reading those, um, whatta you call 'em…books.

COPY OF WIZARD
No joke here, just a shameless plug. Go buy your weight in *Wizards*.

FIRST LOOK

MATRIX

DC'S NEW LINE OF SCIENCE FICTION COMICS BEGINS IN JULY

A VAMPIRE HUNTS VAMPIRE HUNTERS TO SAVE his race. Human brains grow inside animals. A freelance assassin dresses as a nun during a war between Europe and the United States in 2020 A.D.

Those are just a few of the intriguing plotlines being developed under DC Comics' new science fiction imprint, Matrix. "There were some projects floating around which didn't quite fit into Vertigo or anywhere else," recalls Stuart Moore, the former Vertigo editor who heads up the new line. "We'll be producing six or seven titles a month, with four ongoing series and two or three mini-series running at a time."

Debuting this summer, here's a look at the first batch of Matrix titles:

➜ **Cyberella** (July, ongoing series)—An ongoing series written by Howard Chaykin, with art by Don Cameron. Set in the near future, 20-year-old Sunny Winston is transformed into a virtual reality nightmare by the corporation that fired her. And now she's out for sweet revenge…that is, unless the corporation gets to her first.

➜ **Gemini Blood** (July, ongoing)—Writer Christopher Hinz based this series on his Paratwa Saga book trilogy about a combat squad trying to beat fierce genetically engineered assassins that have two bodies to work with. Tommy Lee Edwards is the artist and Walt Simonson will do the first six covers.

➜ **Vermillion** (August, ongoing)—Award-winning sci-fi writer Lucius Shepard's ongoing story of interplanetary thief Jonathan Cave, who discovers the frightening secret behind a form of interstellar travel that literally transforms its passengers. Al Davison draws the first six-issue story arc and Michael Kaluta will do the first year's covers.

➜ **Bloody Mary** (August, four-issues)—Written by Garth Ennis with art by Carlos Ezquerra, this tale has an assassin, dressed as a nun, avenging the death of her old commando team.

➜ **The Black Lamb** (September, six issues)—Writer/artist Timothy Truman's twist on the traditional vampire tale about a vampire that hunts vampire hunters.

➜ **Time Breakers** (November, five issues)—Writer Rachel Pollack and artist Chris Weston tell the story of a group of temporal investigators whose mission is to create time paradoxes to insure humanity's survival.

➜ **Brainbanx** (December, six issues)—A story about a future where human organs are being grown inside animals; two humans must find out which animals have human brains. By writer Elaine Lee and artist Temujin.

"Matrix will publish comics with the same sort of seriousness and intellectual intent as Vertigo has done," sums up Moore, "but with a little more action. It's an adult line, with adult sensibilities, but there will be nothing that would prevent younger readers from enjoying the stories as well." W

Jack Curtin, who reported on Stardust *last issue, is a vampire hunter who better watch his back. (Say…did you hear something?)*

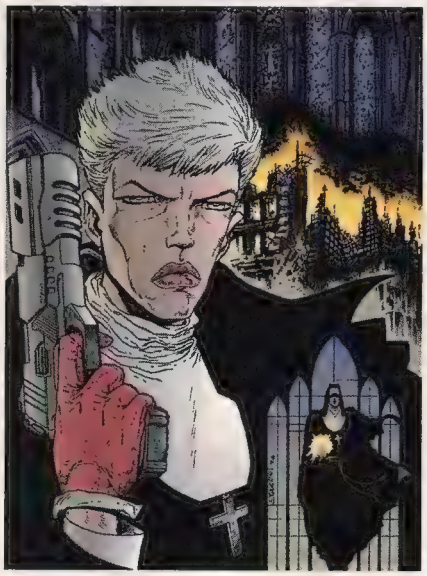
VITAL STATS

WHO?
Creators like Tim Truman, Howard Chaykin, Garth Ennis, Elaine Lee and a smattering of sci-fi luminaries

WHAT?
Matrix, DC Comics' creator-owned science fiction imprint

DEBUT?
The imprint debuts in July

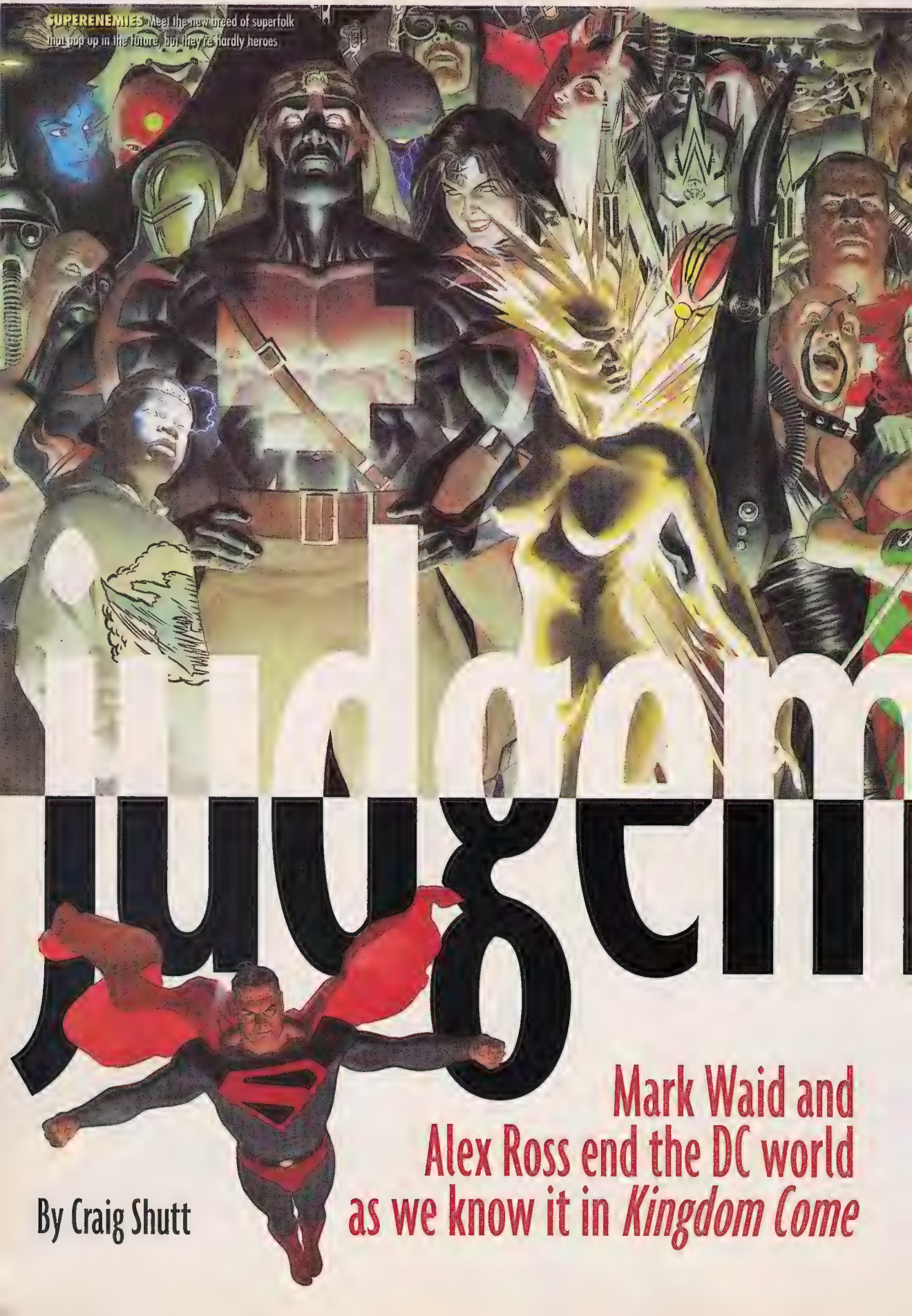
WHAT'S THE DEAL?
Matrix is another step in DC's effort to expand and diversify its market, in the tradition of the company's Vertigo and Paradox Press imprints.



Above: ***Bloody Mary***
Right: ***Cyberella***
Far Right: ***The Black Lamb***

BY JACK CURTIN

Vermillion



SUPERENEMIES Meet the new breed of superfolk that pop up in the future, but they're hardly heroes

Kingdom

Mark Waid and Alex Ross end the DC world as we know it in *Kingdom Come*

By Craig Shutt

ent
rit
day

ALEX ROSS LOVES TO PAINT SUPERHEROES. And there's no doubt that his latest project *Kingdom Come* is about superheroes. "*Kingdom Come* requires a future filled with superheroes," Ross explains. "By the time this story takes place, they've become a significant proportion of the population."

Written by Mark Waid, the four-issue *Kingdom Come* mini-series depicts his and Ross' vision of the DC Universe some 20 years in the future. And that future begins in May.

To achieve the look of their future world, Ross redesigned "just about everybody who has had any nominal importance in DC's history," he says. He aged some of them, passed on redesigned costumes to new candidates, and sprinkled in a hefty share of sons and daughters. He also created a totally new generation of young, upcoming heroes.

That superheroic overabundance, however, doesn't mean readers will need a scorecard to keep track of everyone, stresses Waid. "We don't want to disappoint anyone, but when you've got 900 superheroes walking around, you can't give them *all* speaking parts, or it becomes a cacophony," he says. "We swore we'd make this book as reader-friendly as possible, so people who have no familiarity with most of these characters would love it too. If you know the characters, it's a bonus to try to figure out their back story and where they've been. But if you don't know them, you won't be lost."

Ross agrees. "We're focusing on a small main cast and a few supporting characters. The readers will have to come up with their own guesses for why I thought most of these guys got to where they are. I'm hoping this is palatable to kids and adults both. It may be too intellectual for small kids, but they'll be able to follow it and get out of it whatever they want, and parents won't have to hide it from them."

THE KEY EVENT preceding the story in these four 48-page books came when Superman retired. "Some years earlier, Superman threw up his hands and said, 'I'm done,' " Waid explains. "When he does that, the others ask themselves what hope there is for them to accomplish anything. Superman starts a giant chain reaction that leads to some of the older heroes retiring, others deciding to look out for themselves and a few continuing to fight the good fight."

Into that vacuum came a new group of younger, harsher heroes. "They're the type who have no regard for the people they're protecting," Waid explains. "They throw buses at each other and don't think about the consequences."

Kingdom Come opens with the Spectre, God's angel of judgment, receiving a vision of a coming apocalypse. That ultimately will result in a war among and between the heroes. "The actual war is the climax to the book," Waid

says. "The main story deals with how events build to that." To help the Spectre understand these developments, he co-opts a minister, Norman McCay, to interpret them in human terms. The story is seen through McCay's eyes, as he tries to make sense of the vast throng of superheroes preparing for what is to come.

"This is mostly Superman's story," Waid says. "His fatal flaw is that he doesn't realize how important he is [to the world and to the other heroes]. It's a necessary flaw, because if he knew, he'd have a swelled head. What makes him Superman is his innocence, his belief that he's just a farm boy from Kansas."

Though Waid and Ross are keeping it a secret as to why Superman returns from retirement, he nonetheless reappears by gathering an army of older superheroes. "He's not really good at it," Waid states. "He's not really a world leader and doesn't think in that scope. He's not stupid, but he becomes frustrated because there's nothing to punch. Superman is a smart man, he's not a clever man."

But Batman is. And he *didn't* retire. "Batman starts to marshal his own forces, for his own purposes," Waid relates. "That ultimately will put him at odds with Superman."

Ross sees a basic distinction between the two DC icons. "Batman, to me, is about five years older than Superman," he says. "He has a father/son role with Robin and should give off a sense of being older and wiser. He's the smartest superhero, the essence of thinking. Superman is powerful, but the 'super' applies to every aspect of his life. He's always trying to do the right thing, not just physically. He's the best, the kindest, the most giving, and he's trying to be the smartest. But it's not the kind of smart that Batman is. I wanted to play off that distinction between being noble and smart and being clever." Ross laughs. "But not even Batman is clever enough to see the end of this story coming."

The other key figure in the book is DC's third icon, Wonder Woman. "Wonder Woman was the toughest nut for me to crack," admits Waid. "Not only wasn't I as big a fan of hers as I was of Superman and Batman as a kid, but I just couldn't understand her. She preaches love and peace, but she goes around punching people. As [*Kingdom Come* editor] Dan Raspler says, she isn't from Paradise Island, she's from Paradox Island."

Ultimately, though, he finally understood the Amazon's outlook and motivations. "Once I got to the scene where I did get the handle on her—and I won't say where that is—it all came together. Wonder Woman is one of the most complex characters in the book, with her own distinct story to tell."

WAID BEGAN telling these stories in April 1994, when Raspler faxed him seven single-spaced pages from Ross' original story proposal. Coming off of *Marvels*, Ross' acclaimed four-part series with writer Kurt Busiek that examined the Marvel Universe's early days, Ross mapped out some thoughts on where the DC Universe ultimately might wind up.

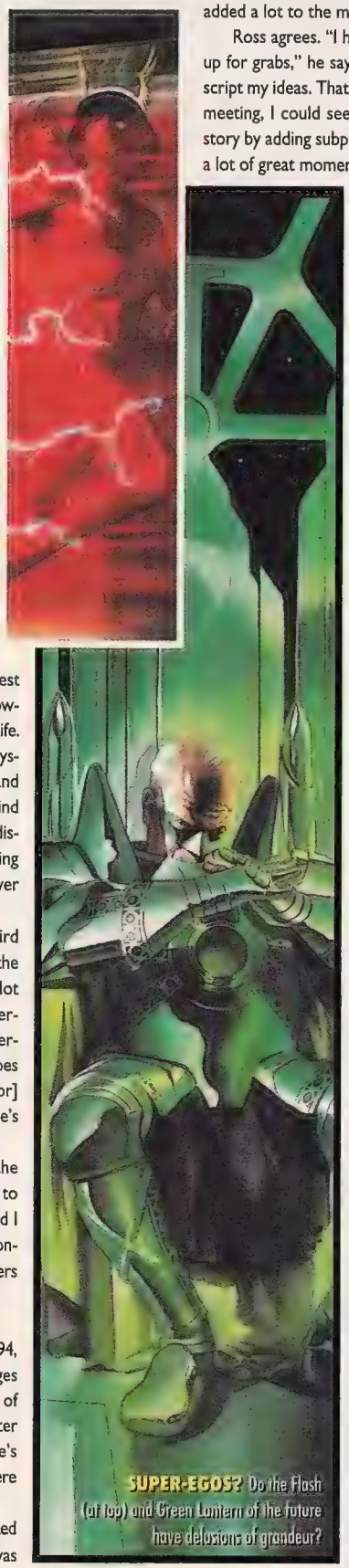
These notes—about 40 pages in all—represented only a framework onto which a deeper story was constructed. "There was a beginning point and an end point, but it wasn't a story," Waid says. "Alex had a general idea and a lot of cool scenes he wanted to paint. We've kept pretty closely to what he set down, but we've added a lot to the middle."

Ross agrees. "I had point A and point Z, but points B through Y were up for grabs," he says. "That was fine, because I didn't want Mark to just script my ideas. That would have been a hollow experience. From our first meeting, I could see I was in good hands. Mark brought a depth to the story by adding subplots and fleshing out how things progressed. I created a lot of great moments, but he made it all work."

Ross then laughs. "But he'll tell you he got a walloping amount of input from me, more than I could have hoped for. I'm sure it's more than he's ever gotten on a project and a lot more than he wanted."

Waid doesn't deny it. Early on, he traveled to Ross' Chicago studio, where they spent a weekend hashing out details. It took more to make this work than just swapping the heroes back and forth between Superman and Batman's teams, he notes. "Alex knew Superman retired and then returned, but he didn't know why," Waid says. "We had to answer that first, because I found it almost impossible to believe Superman would ever retire. We bounced it back and forth over and over and over, and we still are to this day."

Indeed, in mid-February, Waid still had the final six pages of the series to script, and Ross estimated he was about three months from finishing his paintings. Neither is rushing it. "I have it all in my head, but the ending's not on paper yet," admits Waid. "Giving a good sense of closure to a 180-page story is something I want to really take my time with so I do it right." Ross was using that lag time to perfect his hero-laden covers and paint portions of the saga-ending war, he says. "Painting fight scenes with hundreds of characters takes a lot more time than a normal page."



SUPER-EGOS? Do the Flash (at top) and Green Lantern of the future have delusions of grandeur?

CHARACTER DESIGNS generated no conflicts, Ross notes, because Waid left that up to his co-creator. "Mark mostly worked with what I created, but we both generally agreed on how most of the characters worked." In a few cases, such as Green Arrow and the Black Canary, Waid played up their roles because their sketches were so cool. "Captain Comet is another one who I've always loved," Waid adds. "And I loved Alex's rendition of him."

They both agree that their favorite character was Superman, but each has his own preferred supporting player. For Waid, Deadman wins the nod, as the writer reverted him to the wise-cracking guy he'd been up till the 1980s. "Deadman has a very small but important role, and he was the most fun," he says. "I didn't realize that I love Deadman as much as I do until I wrote this. He comes along at just the right point in the story. When I was writing him, I found out something new about him, and he has one of my favorite lines."

Ross has a soft spot for Nightstar, the daughter of Nightwing and Starfire. Not only did he create a heroine who could exist in current continuity, but he based her on a design he originated when he was 11 years old. "Her look flowed out of those memories, and it made sense to use them here," he explains. "She has roots in my own personal history." He was

WHAT IT TAKES №33

What's it take to make a great comic book?

VAMPIRE STRIPPERS.

QUENTIN TARANTINO
SCREENWRITER

FROM

ROBERT RODRIGUEZ
DIRECTOR

DUSK TILL DAWN
THE DELUXE EDITION

COMING IN MAY.

SUPERFRIENDS The future holds more than its fair share of heroes, though some are more heroic than others

reluctant to give her to the DC Universe, he admits, "but I came to terms with the fact that most of the stuff I created when I was a kid was really derivative. I realized that I could use this without leaving a personal piece of me behind."

Although most of the heroes' roles fell into place easily, a few caused disagreements. The primary snag centered on J'onn J'onzz, the Martian Manhunter. "I thought he screwed up the balance of power, but Mark really wanted to use him," explains Ross. "I had to fight tooth and nail to somehow remove him from the action. He had no antecedent in the Justice Society of America, nor was he in [the animated TV show] "Super Friends," which the entire world knows. So to me, he really isn't in the upper echelon of heroes."

Counters Waid, "Alex is too young to understand that J'onn is a seminal hero in the DC Universe," he argues. "Alex grew up in the 1980s, for God's sake. We fought like cats and dogs over J'onn's role." Ultimately, they agree, they found the perfect spot for the Manhunter. "It's a small role, but it's a key one," Waid says. Adds Ross, "His cameo offers a very interesting take, presenting a perspective that I really like."

Another clash erupted over how to treat the supervillains. "Mark insisted that we couldn't skip over these classic villains and say they're all dead," he says. "He came up with a great way to fit them in." Adds Waid, "My favorite part of the whole book was dealing with the supervillains. Luthor is one of my favorites because of his sense of humor."

The villains' roles, explains Ross, evolve from the notion that "the new heroes have become more aggressive vigilantes who kill, while the good heroes have become less good. It's harder to tell who's who." That results in the villains organizing for their own purposes. They create the Mankind Liberation Front, with agendas that go beyond supervillainy. "Their view is that everybody has his own perspective, and nobody is totally wrong."

THE ROLES OF GOOD AND EVIL and the notion of who truly serves humanity stand at the center of the book, the creators say. The god-like nature of several of the older heroes, including Spectre, the older Flash, the older Hawkman, Fate, Dr. Mid-Nite III and the Red Tornado, emphasizes that. "The older heroes have divorced themselves from humanity in many ways," explains Waid. "They have to examine their roles and their place in society."

Ross has said that while *Marvels* in some ways reflected the wonder that readers felt as a superhero universe grew before their eyes, *Kingdom Come* offers a scenario for how a superhero universe winds up. He doesn't deny that he wanted to use the book to explore some of his thoughts on where the comics industry stands today.

"The current state of comics seems to me to be gangs fighting gangs," he says. "DC, Marvel and Image all have people fighting without much reason to be doing it. *DC versus Marvel* is a perfect example of that. In *Kingdom Come*, we're pointing out in a way what would happen if this continued in a world of real, living superheroes."

Adds Waid, "We started this with one joke: 'What if the Image Universe invaded the DC Universe?' But that was simply a starting point, and a short-hand way of saying it. It applies to almost any superhero created after about 1972. I think the older DC heroes were more concerned with ordinary people. The new breed makes things into a big World Wrestling Federation match between superheroes, and they don't seem to care who's in the middle."

As for his next superhero book, Ross has some ideas. "I still have lots of projects I'd like to do with DC, and certainly there are some I could imagine doing with Marvel after things settle down," he says. "There's no end to the ideas I have for stuff, both independent or part of the superhero genre. They may be single-character focuses, though, because I'm not sure I have another multi-character extravaganza in me."

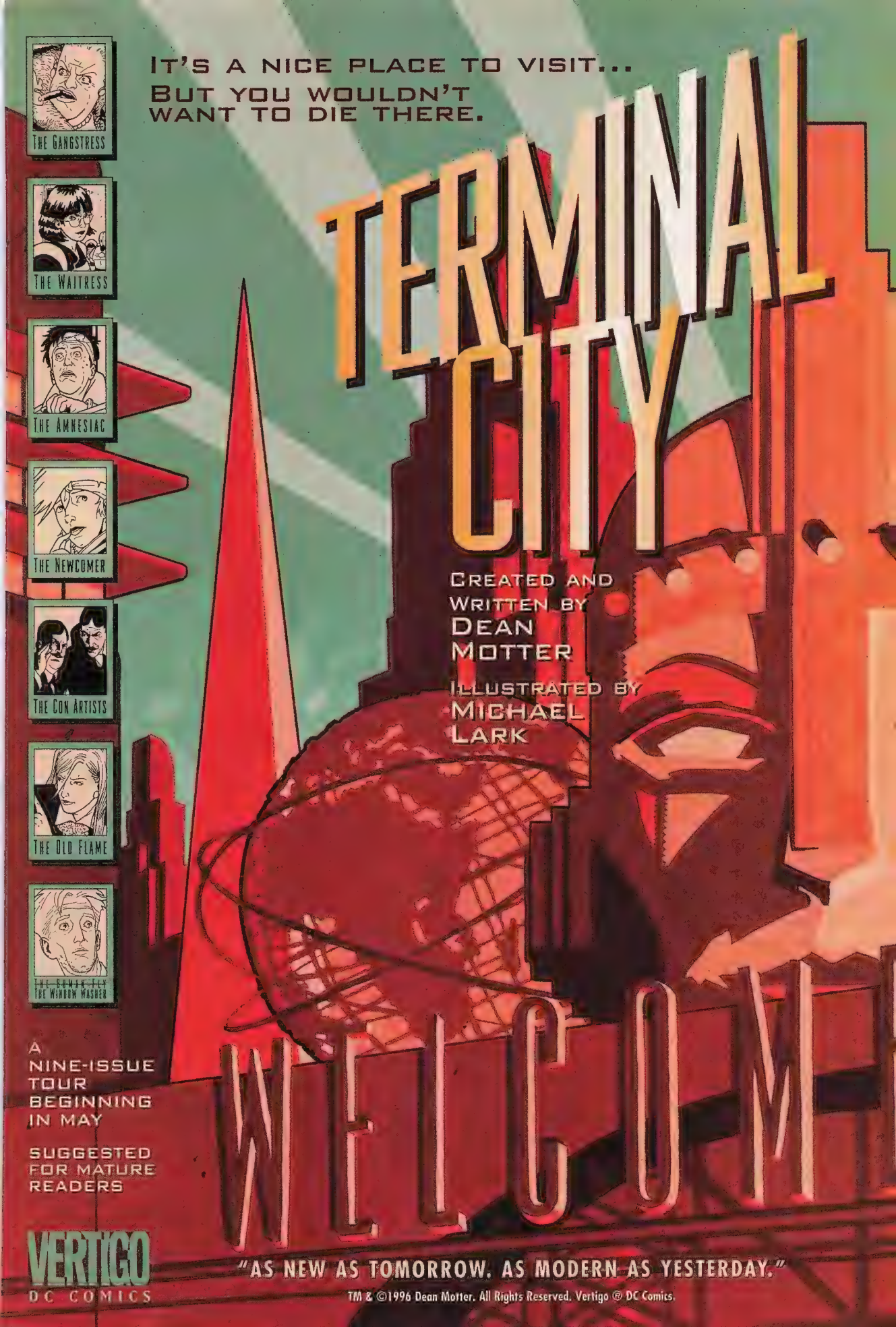
Waid can understand that. "If it had been up to me, this story would have been Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman, and nobody else," he laughs. "They were the most complex and the most fun to write." That's not the version we'll be seeing, of course. Because Alex Ross loves to paint superheroes.

Craig Shutt, who reported on the Amalgam Universe in issue #56, would really like to see another Alex Ross-painted superhero project.

KINGDOM CAME

Once *Kingdom Come* ends in August, Alex Ross will begin work on two 48-page books for Vertigo about Uncle Sam. "They'll be my interpretation of Uncle Sam the icon," he explains, not the former Quality Comics character now being revamped in *The Spectre*. Written by Steve Darnall, the project will take Ross about nine months to complete, and he figures it will appear late in 1997. "So much has been said with *Marvels*, and so much more will be said with *Kingdom Come*, that I need to get away from the superhero genre for a little bit."

But that won't last. He's set his eye on contributing a major project, a graphic novel or something even bigger, to Superman's 60th anniversary in 1998. "I've been thinking about it a lot already," he says. "I'm extremely interested in the character, mostly because of the time I've been able to spend with him on *Kingdom Come*. If there's anyone I want to come back to, it's him." CS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BUT YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO DIE THERE.
TERMINAL CITY
CREATED AND WRITTEN BY DEAN MOTTER
ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL LARK
THE GANGSTRESS
THE WAITRESS
THE AMNESIAC
THE NEWCOMER
THE CON ARTISTS
THE OLD FLAME
THE WINDOW WASHER
A NINE-ISSUE TOUR BEGINNING IN MAY
SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS
VERTIGO
DC COMICS
"AS NEW AS TOMORROW. AS MODERN AS YESTERDAY."
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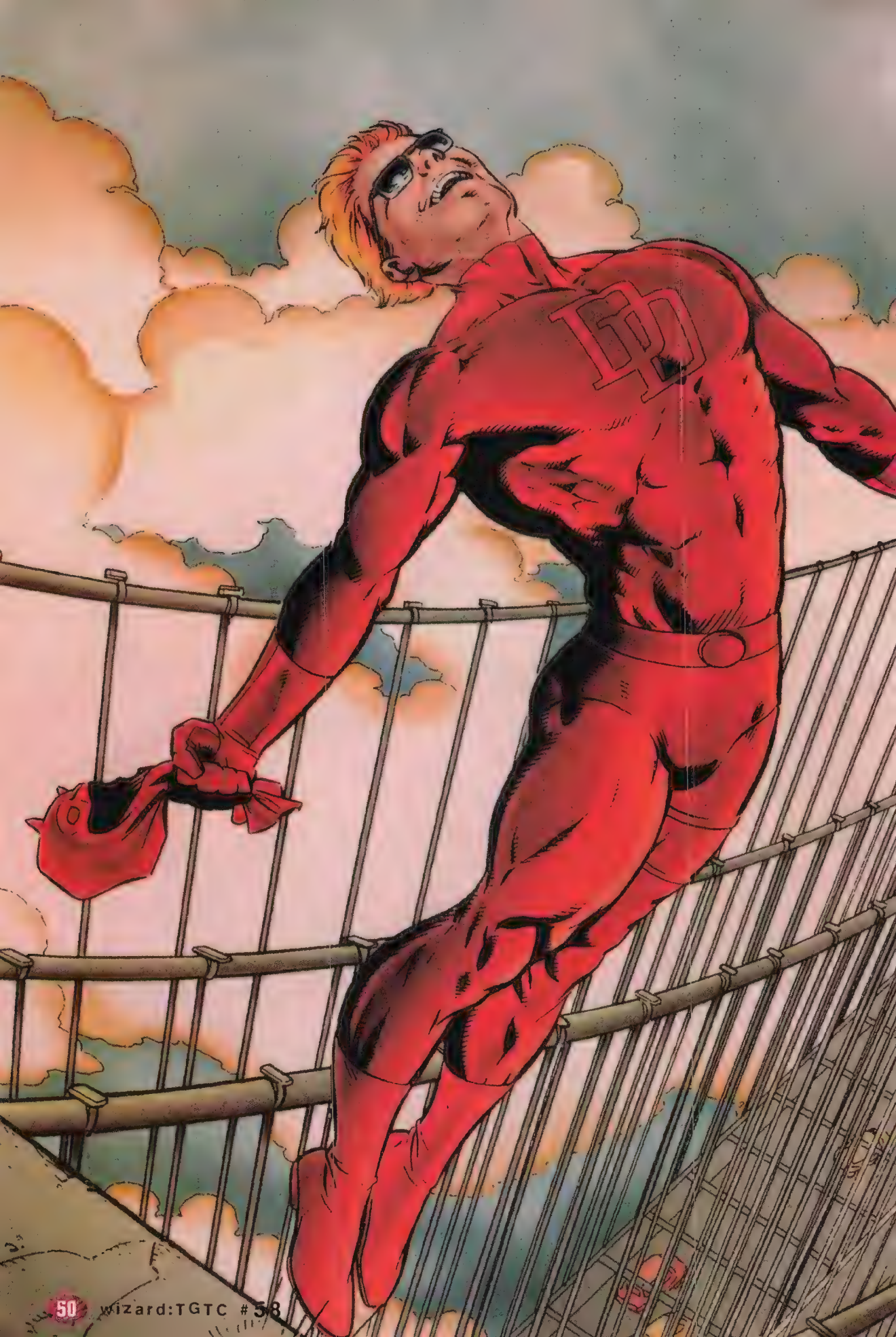


WAKING THE DEVIL

KARL KESEL RETURNS DAREDEVIL TO HIS ROOTS WITH A WHIMSICAL TWIST

BY MATTHEW BRADY

"The wise-cracking hornhead," new *Daredevil* writer Karl Kesel says. "That's what I like to call him now, the wise-cracking hornhead."

After Matt Murdock's world was rocked and the pieces put back together by writer J.M. DeMatteis, Daredevil is being taken back to his roots from the days of writer Stan Lee and penciler Gene Colan, and Kesel couldn't be happier. "I'm basing Daredevil on my memories of the old Lee/Colan issues," Kesel explains, who takes over the title in April with issue #353. "They were like the John Woo movies of the time. There seemed to be a real over-the-top feel to Daredevil stories then, almost as if Stan was trying to compensate for the fact that Daredevil wasn't quite as strong as Spider-Man, so he'd put him into more outrageous situations."

That approach appeals to the writer, who is known for his *Adventures of Superman* and *Superboy* work. "Daredevil should constantly be seen doing death-defying acts, like leaping off of the tops of skyscrapers and the Brooklyn Bridge," he says. "And all the time he's doing these stunts, he's *smiling*. I like that. That approach appealed to me, and helped convince me *Daredevil* would be an assignment worth taking."

The classic grim-and-gritty Daredevil defined by writer/penciler Frank Miller hasn't been scrubbed from the face of the Earth, however. While Kesel admits the darker version of Daredevil does have certain advantages, his take on Daredevil will be in a somewhat lighter vein. "The first page of my first issue will define what Daredevil is to me—it's a big portrait of Daredevil looking at the reader, saying 'Trust me,' with a caption that reads, 'The devil said.' That kind of sums up what Daredevil is. There's a sense of whimsy to him, but a sense of the ominous as well."

Joining Kesel in chronicling this new chapter in Daredevil's life will be penciler Cary (*Bruce Wayne: Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*) Nord. Under the "control" of Kesel and Nord, Daredevil will settle on one costume. "Red, red, red," Kesel says. "No more razor-bladed costume, no more yellow-and-red outfit. Just the classic red."

As for his place in the Marvel Universe, Kesel says that Daredevil's path should cross with that of a certain wall-crawler a little more often. "Daredevil and Spider-Man are two guys I think work well together anyway. They're the Bob Hope and Bing Crosby of the Marvel Universe. When I get around to it, I'm going to do a story with both of them called, 'The Road to...somewhere,' " Kesel laughs.

On the more serious side, Osborn Chemicals will play a minor role in Kesel's first issue, and there is talk of a supporting character from the Spider-Man books joining Daredevil's cast. "We want to stress the idea that these characters exist in the same New York City. What happens in one book will hopefully be mentioned in the other," Kesel says. "Putting Spider-Man and Daredevil together is good both creatively and commercially, so why avoid it?"

Matt Murdock's law career will once again play a major role in the book, starting when Matt is called on to defend Mr. Hyde, who's been accused of murder. While Matt knows Hyde is nasty guy, and will probably commit more crimes if he goes free, he believes Hyde is innocent this time. When the Mr. Hyde storyline is resolved, Mr. Hyde will very much be *the* Daredevil villain. Wherever he shows up next, DD will have a vested interest in stopping him.

Other plans for DD's future include a run-in with the Black Cat, the return of Misty Knight, going toe-to-toe with the Lizard, and an exploration of superhero law (Who serves Spider-Man with a subpoena, anyway?). This makeover will basically produce, as Kesel promises, "Fun, gripping and entertaining stories worth the readers' money and time." W

If freelancer Matthew Brady, who did the Hulk profile this issue, jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge, he wouldn't be smiling. No way, man!

Left and above: Nord's rendition of Daredevil

By the Wizard staff

You Can't Handle the Truth!

The Top 10 Unresolved X-Men Plots are at last answered

"What the hell's going on here?"

That's a question we frequently ask ourselves when it comes to some of the things going on in alla them X-Men-related comics. Just when some cool revelation or story subplot is revealed, it either takes forever to resolve or it's never touched upon again. And there's a *lot* of 'em.

So we figured we'd point out the 10 most talked-about unresolved plots and go straight to the source: Marvel Editor-in-Chief and X-Men Editor Bob Harras. Surely he, of all people, would know the answers. And guess what? We didn't get all the answers, but thought we'd take a stab at resolving them ourselves.

PLOT: Who is the X-traitor?

WHERE IT STANDS: When Bishop first appeared on the scene, he told the X-Men that in the future they will be massacred by one of their own. He singled out Gambit, then a new member of the team, who was the only surviving member in this future.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "You will find that out within the next few months. And Bishop will be taken aback by who it is."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: We think it's Rogue. Think about it: Bishop saw a videotape with Jean Grey saying stuff like "powers negated," "knew so little about their past," and then getting blown away on screen. Whoever did it needed the muscle to take the whole team. Rogue can steal (i.e., negate) your powers, the X-Men know next to nothing about her past, and she can kick some major bootie (especially after adding defeated X-teammates' powers to her own). And gee, why would the traitor let Gambit survive, unless this person had feelings for him…?

Plus, she's been acting a little flaky lately, so she's our best bet.

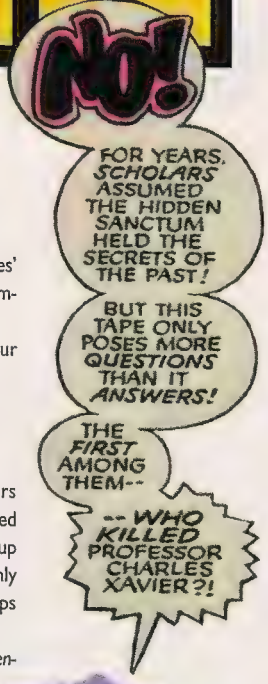
PLOT: What is Sinister's interest in the Summers brothers?

WHERE IT STANDS: Sinister has been all over the Summers brothers, especially Scott (a.k.a. Cyclops). Sinister has followed Cyclops from childhood to his X-Men days; he even set up Jean Grey's clone (Madelyne Pryor) to have Cyclops' kid, only for Sinister to kidnap the baby. Sinister's been after Cyclops ever since.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "I'd tell you to read *The Further Adventures of Cyclops and Phoenix* mini-series [starting in April], 'cause you'll get a clue there. You learn Sinister's origin, his connection with Apocalypse and his ongoing interest in the Summers brothers."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: If you've been paying attention, this one's not so tough. Sinister's after a handful of Cyclops' genetic material. As we've seen in that "Age of Apocalypse" brouhaha, the offspring of Cyclops is gonna be one powerful tyke (a.k.a. X-Man) and Sinister wants to control it. This guy just wants his own li'l "X-Man."

Aw, pipe down Bishop– you'll find out soon enough!



Will Gambit and Rogue call it quits for good?

PLOT: Will Rogue and Gambit ever live happily ever after?

WHERE IT STANDS: Recently Rogue discovered Gambit's deep, dark secret when she temporarily absorbed his powers and memories. She felt she needed some time away from both him and the X-Men to sort her life and priorities out.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "We've got another character coming aboard very soon that acts as a spoiler for poor Rogue and Gambit. Rogue is going to find herself tempted from both sides. It's a twist Gambit isn't going to be too happy about." When asked if the amnesiac Magneto was the spoiler character, Harras coyly smiles, "I believe he's called Joseph now...."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: Mmmm...they probably will, but not for a long time. The X-writers already have the semi-star-crossed couple of Archangel and Psylocke to mess with. Meanwhile, Rogue and Gambit are definitely headed towards a major shake-up in their soon-to-be ex-relationship.

PLOT: It has been hinted that there is a third Summers brother; if so, who is he?

WHERE IT STANDS: After Cyclops fought the Dark Riders, Mr. Sinister mentioned to him that he had been keeping an eye on his *brothers* in *X-Men* (second series) #23. Since Cyclops only knows of one brother (Alex, a.k.a. Havok), this leaves one previously unknown brother.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "Sinister let that one drop. We won't be dealing with that for a while. But I will say that fans have seen this character before."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: We think Gambit is the third brother. It's already been said that he doesn't know his poppa, so maybe Corsair (Cyclops and Havok's dad) slept around a bit while he was in the military. And knowing that we've seen the third brother before, Gambit's our best bet.

PLOT: What's the deep, dark secret behind Gambit's mysterious, possibly evil, background?

WHERE IT STANDS: It has been recently revealed that Gambit has had some past dealings with Sinister—something he's not proud of.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "If I told you that, it'll ruin everything," he laughs. "He's obviously done something he's ashamed of that has put him in cahoots with Sinister. Whether he can free himself of that...*debt*...is something that we will see."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: We think that Gambit went to work for Sinister and worked as a point man for Sinister's Marauders team. It's been shown that ex-Marauder Sabretooth knows Gambit from way back when, and he made a comment along the lines of "What you doin' workin' on the side of the angels?" Having quit the Marauders before he completed all the tasks he agreed to (Possibly taking down the X-Men?), Gambit still has an uncompleted contract with Sinister.

PLOT: With two Externals dead, where does this leave the whole "an External can't die" storyline?

WHERE IT STANDS: Introduced in *X-Force* #8, an External was explained to be a select mutant who, once he "dies" the first time, would wake up and live for all eternity. It hasn't been looked into since.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "Good question. It was something that hadn't been touched upon in a while, and people had forgotten," he laughs. "An External should not die, so something is obviously going on. It might take a while to get to, but that story is just the first platform of a story down the road."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: Putting aside that the whole External thing was a terrible idea, we figure there's some villain behind the deaths with the ability to suck up whatever it is inside an External that makes 'em special, leaving them high and dry while he gets eternal life (or something).

PLOT: What role will the Dark Beast play now that he's infiltrated the X-Men?

WHERE IT STANDS: The evil Dark Beast, who survived the timeline-altering aftermath of "The Age of Apocalypse" story, has taken the good Beast captive while he takes his place in the X-Men.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "He will have an interesting twist in the *Onslaught: X-Men* storyline [in June]. Also, the Dark Beast will introduce a new group of foes for the X-Men."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: We'd like to see the Dark Beast off some X-characters (like Cannonball, Archangel and somebody on Generation X), but the odds of that are pretty slim. We see him royally screwing the X-Men, but they'll eventually come out on top. We'd like to see Wolverine put DB out of commission—permanently.

PLOT: Wolverine's true origin: Will the truth ever be told, or will there always be a murky haze of memory implants and surreal dream sequences?

WHERE IT STANDS: Who knows? It's unknown as to what is true and what is a memory implant. Wolverine has "remembered" times during the Spanish Civil War and World War II, as well as a stint with the Canadian Secret Service and then being a part of the secret Weapon X project, where adamantium was laced into his bones. It's not certain what is true and what isn't.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "After 'Weapon X' came out [in *Marvel Comics Presents* #72-#84, 1991], everyone wanted to tell his origin story. I wanted to veer away from that because the character is more interesting than his origin. We're not touching that for a while. So, for now, there's still a lot of dreams with that origin story."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: Just thinking about this gives us a headache. It was a mistake to ever start with the memory implants and Marvel knows it. One of Wolvie's strongest appeals as a character was the whole mystery-man aspect. The truth will NEVER be told.

PLOT: With all the various mutant "futures" going on, which is the true future of the X-Men?

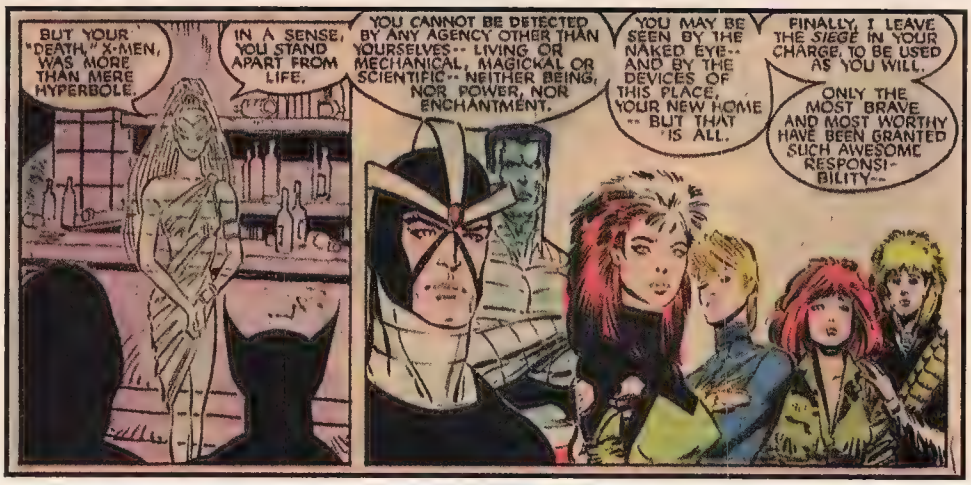
WHERE IT STANDS: The first known future timeline was that of "Days of Future Past," where the Sentinels rule the Earth, and all mutants are placed in concentration camps; the X-Men, during the present time, learned of this future and managed to divert an assassination which was to trigger events that led to it. Then there is Cable's future timeline, where Apocalypse rules the world. There's also Bishop's future, where mutants have been accepted by society. And of course, we've got X-Nation, a city-state presided over by mutants in 2099.

BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "To my mind, the real deal is the 'Days of Future Past' future. No matter how the X-Men are trying to prevent it, it is heading in that direction with the Sentinels taking over. That doesn't mean that everything is going to happen exactly the way they think it will. One of the things we're hoping to do in November is an event that is not quite what Kate Pryde came back in time to warn the X-Men about, but it's so similar that it makes the X-Men think, 'We obviously changed something, but not enough.' Bishop comes from a future that is actually of the same thread. His time is 70 to 100 years after the 'Days of Future Past' future."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: Someday soon you'll see some sort of giant Marvel crossover called "Day of the Sentinels," dealing with all the Marvel heroes trying to destroy those killer droids. The series will end with the heroes triumphant, but with an epilogue hinting that the Sentinel threat isn't over.

PLOT: The X-Men became invisible to all electronic sensors in "The Fall of the Mutants" storyline. Whatever happened to that?

WHERE IT STANDS: After "The Fall," the sorceress Roma gifted the X-Men with invisibility to all electronic sensors, including cameras and security devices. The team then spent time in Australia, with the world believing them dead. They returned to the U.S. after about a year and their invisibility to all sensors was never mentioned again.



BOB HARRAS' RESPONSE: "I think Roma had a bad day and she forgot about it," he laughs. "We kinda let that one drop over time. I was just hoping someone would write in and explain it so they could get a No-Prize. I remember one time I was working with Jim Lee and Scott Lobdell on the X-Men and we actually had an explanation, but it was never put into print."

WIZARD'S RESPONSE: Ugh. We forgot about that idea too. We guess that Roma had to gather up all her magicks for her recent bout with the Adversary in *X-Factor* (#119-#121) and kinda took back her li'l gift to the X-Men. Hopefully she'll keep it. The less magic and mysticism in the X-books, the better. W

The Wizard staff just wants the Sentinels to not be treated like big cartoon robots that are fun to blow up, but as the dangerous, evil monsters they were in Uncanny X-Men *#141-#142.*

create-a-plot

How hard is it writing for the best-selling line of comics on the planet? Actually, not too tough. In fact, we can teach you to do it in five easy steps. First, just take one plot device at random from the first category (yellow) and link it to a plot device from the next category (orange), then to the next, and so on. It's super-easy, and hey, the pay's great!

Explosive Splash Page

- Archangel battles to control the dark urges of his metallic wings, when, after almost surrendering to evil, he discovers that...
- A brooding, unshaven Gambit wrestles with telling the team his dark secret, until he overhears a conversation revealing that...
- Wolverine lays bloody and motionless on the floor, triggering a suppressed memory where we learn...
- Prof. X sits with one arm in the toilet after trying to get from the crapper to his wheelchair, when a sudden telepathic message exposes that...

Surprising Plot Twist

- ...Psylocke's a guy! That wacky Siege Perilous had a sense of humor, and now Betsy pees standing up. But what good will that do her against...
- ...Mr. Sinister just blew up a tour bus full of midgets! Can the X-Men cope with blackened dwarf chunks and...
- ...Bishop just ate his body weight in Mentos and can't stop giggling like a schoolgirl! Will he fall prey to...
- ...Lockheed's in heat and Leech and Artie are running for their lives! Can the X-Men save the mutant tykes from a severe rudeness and overcome...

Baffling Fight-Scene

- ...the team's evil time-traveling future selves from a hellish reality where people liked the Spider-Clone and "Waterworld"?
- ...the team's alternate-reality evil selves from a world where Secret Defenders outsells Wolverine?
- ...a bug-eyed Apocalypse who just caught himself in his zipper and started shouting a bunch of stuff you usually only see in Vertigo comics?
- ...the evil clones of the team's younger selves who have their own children cloned to send them into the future only to have them come back in time to warn their parents not to have them in the first place?

Foreboding Subplot Development

- Meanwhile, the Dark Beast performs evil experiments on Sammy Davis Jr.'s corpse, inadvertently popping out its glass eye...
- Meanwhile, Mojo downs an entire Fudgie the Whale Carvel ice cream cake when—bam!—his colostomy bag goes off like a rocket...
- Meanwhile, the Blob explodes after eating his 113th fish taco, sending his colon hurtling across time and space...
- Meanwhile, still-smoking pieces of Thunderbird from when he was blown up in [illegible] #95 finally re-enter Earth's atmosphere...

Climactic Cliffhanger Ending

- ...nailing the mutant island Krakoa right in the cahones, toppling the behemoth onto France. The Smurfs, all mimes and Jerry Lewis are killed.
- ...smacking John Byrne in the back of the head and making him swallow his gum. Now he's really pissed and double-swears to never work for Marvel again!
- ...hitting the Death Star in just the right spot, setting off a chain reaction that blows it, six kajillion Stormtroopers and Peter Cushing up. (Let's see those Death Star engineers get work after this.)
- ...ricocheting off of Magneto's helmet, turning it sideways so he can't see and making him pee all over his boots. Thinks to self: "This kind of $#!% never happened when Claremont used to write us." ■

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SCORE	RANK
0-4	**Aquagirl:** Just another redundant character. She may be able talk to fish, but what the hell do they have to say, anyhow?
5-14	**Marrina:** So dull a character, they killed her off. She now sleeps with the fishes.
15-19	**The Fin:** He was lame in the 1940s, and now he is lame in the 1990s. One of the most consistent of Marvel characters.
20	**Sea Monkeys:** They may not be superheroes, but they don't look like monkeys, either.

HEY! **Listen up, suckers! Impress your friends with incredibly obscure comic facts. How, you ask? Well, just keep reading. It sure beats the hell out of *Reader's Digest*'s "Improving Your Word Power" section.**

1. When they first met, what excuse did Alpha Flight have for brawling with the X-Men?
A) The X-Men broke into a top-secret Canadian military facility.
B) Wolverine had voted for Quebec's secession.
C) The Master held Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau hostage and threatened to kill him, unless Alpha Flight would destroy the X-Men.
D) The X-Men were trying to prevent Alpha Flight from kidnapping Wolverine.

2. Who has never had a crossover with Batman?
A) Robocop
B) Predator
C) Hulk
D) Judge Dredd

3. What do Prime, the Elementals' Monolith I and Dr. Doom protégé, Kristoff Vernard, have in common?
A) All were born outside the United States.
B) All three have died and been brought back to life.
C) They all have radioactive blood.
D) They are all adolescent boys.

4. On "The Simpsons," what is the name of the cartoon mascot/tour guide for Springfield's nuclear power plant?
A) Uranium Rod
B) Blinky, the Three-Eyed Fish
C) Smilin' Joe Fission
D) Writhin' Jake Tumor

5. Image amazon Glory once belonged to a World War II era super-team. What was the name of that team?
A) The All-Star Squadron
B) The Allies
C) The Triple Entente
D) The Alliance

6. Which fictitious Dark Horse town had the gumption to secede from the United States?
A) Golden City
B) Astro City
C) Dakota
D) Arcadia

7. In the Image Universe, who is the leader of the band of mutants that reside in the Red Bay Housing Project?
A) Dart
B) John Lynch
C) Magneto
D) Mother-May-I

8. What Civil War ghost inhabits the Haunted Tank?
A) Stonewall Jackson
B) Robert E. Lee
C) Jeb Stuart
D) George Armstrong Custer

9. Which enigmatic character was responsible for the recent Spider-Man and Spider-Man 2099 crossover?
A) Doom 2099
B) the Net Prophet
C) Kang the Conqueror
D) Spider-Man 2211

10. Name the four Legionnaires who form the Espionage Squad.
A) Triad, Triad, Triad and Leviathan
B) Shrinking Violet, Invisible Kid, Ultra Boy and Quantum Kid
C) Invisible Kid, Triad, Shrinking Violet and Chameleon
D) Saturn Girl, Cosmic Boy, Live Wire and Brainiac 5

11. How many androids have been Avengers? (and if you're feeling cocky enough, name 'em)
A) Two
B) Four
C) Six
D) All of the Avengers are androids.

12. The real name of the Supreme that appeared after "Extreme Sacrifice" is:
A) Probe.
B) Val-en.
C) Ethan Crane.
D) Kal-El.

13. How did the Blue Devil get his powers?
A) He was a lesser demon sent by the evil demon supreme, Nebiros, to wreak havoc on earth, but he had a change of heart due to the love of a human (sigh).
B) During the "Bloodlines" storyline, his genes were infected by an alien virus, causing him to mutate into the Blue Devil.
C) He was a special effects expert wearing a Blue Devil costume on a movie set, when up popped the demon Nebiros, who fused his costume to his hide, turning him into a real-life Blue Devil.
D) While exploring the Himalayas, an explorer discovered an ancient scroll. Once he translated it and read the words aloud, he was instantly turned into a Blue Devil.

14. A woman with persuasive powers named Shannon Fitzpatrick recently saved the life of Kaine, Spider-Man's foe. What is her codename?
A) Sham
B) Trance
C) Muse
D) Tremble

15. Before Sunspot was in X-Force, what lame group of heroes did he belong to that also included Moon-Boy and a mutant lobster?
A) New Mutants
B) Fallen Angels
C) Power Pack
D) the Resistants

16. In *Adventures of Superman* #533, who is the villain that planted the fake bombs to draw Superman (and Impulse) away from Metropolis?
A) Lex Luthor
B) Scavenger
C) Doomsday
D) Brainiac

17. Who hasn't had Rick Jones as a sidekick?
A) Rom: Space Knight
B) Thor
C) Captain America
D) Captain Marvel

18. What super-duo never had a comic book with both of their names in the title?
A) Ant-Man and the Wasp
B) Power Man and Iron Fist
C) Daredevil and Black Widow
D) Captain America and the Falcon

19. What was the name of Eric Draven's band in the movie "The Crow"?
A) Hangman's Joke
B) The Regime
C) Wicked Lester
D) Ironically, his band was named Crow.

20. At the very end of the "Trial of Superman" storyline, what was the sentence the Tribunal gave the Man of Steel?
A) Death in the radioactive debris of Krypton
B) Six months of community service by picking up trash along the highways of the Tribunal's planet
C) Going to grade schools across the U.S. and talking to kids about the evils of destroying their home planet
D) A lifetime of fighting the never-ending battle

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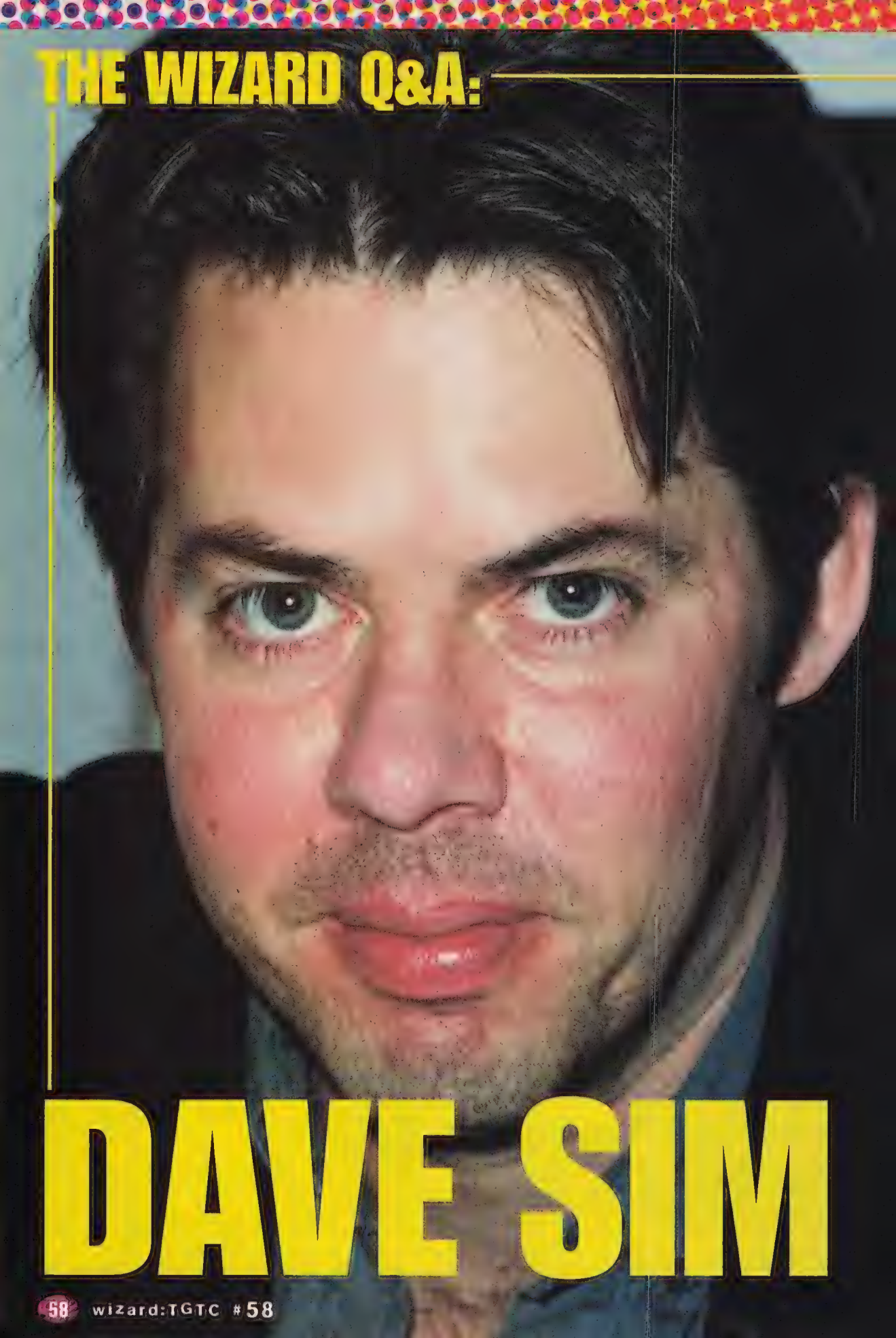
THE WIZARD Q&A:



DAVE SIM

The guru of the small press is overtaking the odds and the skeptics by bringing *Cerebus* to #300 or bust

By Tom Palmer Jr.

Above: Sim's Cerebus ain't afraid of seeing his 300th and final issue

Dave Sim is in the homestretch. After reaching issue #200 of his self-published *Cerebus* last November, the writer/artist only has eight more years until his self-proclaimed final issue of the series, #300, hits the stands. He has survived the many ups and downs of the comic industry for almost two decades, and if one thing's certain, he isn't giving up now.

Two hundred issues of a comic might not seem like much to get excited about. Many mainstream titles are well past that milestone: *Amazing Spider-Man* hit it in 1980 and *Action Comics* trampled it way back in 1955. But those titles withstood a round robin of writers and artists. *Cerebus*, on the other hand, has had only one: Dave Sim. He writes, draws (with the help of background artist Gerhard [see sidebar]) and publishes every monthly issue of *Cerebus*.

In recent years, the 40-year-old Canadian has become an outspoken proponent for creator's rights and self-publishing. His tireless and uplifting efforts on these subjects (including several editorials in *Cerebus*) have led many to see him as the wise man and father figure of the small press. He has even inspired many popular artists to try their hand at self-publishing their own comics. Without his influence, there might not be comics like *Bone*, *Stray Bullets* or *Tyrant* on the racks today.

Vital Stats

Name: Dave Sim
Occupation: Writer, artist, publisher of *Cerebus*
Date and Place of Birth: May 17, 1956 in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
Base of Operations: Kitchener, Ontario, Canada
Favorite Mixed Drink: Bacardi rum and Diet Coke with a slice of lime
Favorite Beer: Heineken in the U.S. and Coors Light in Canada

Publishing your own comic isn't as easy as it sounds, so Sim and Gerhard often spend 10- or 12-hour days in their studio in Kitchener, Ontario, making sure that everything runs smoothly at Sim's publishing company, Aardvark-Vanaheim.

The always upbeat Sim took some time recently to talk to *Wizard* after a full day of writing and drawing *Cerebus* and preparing an exhibition of his and Gerhard's artwork for the Words & Pictures Museum in Northampton, Mass., this June.

WIZARD: You've survived through all the hard times in the comic industry for almost two decades. What do you think is the secret to your success?

SIM: As Bob Burden [creator of *The Flaming Carrot*] once said, "I've been around the block so many times I feel like my turn blinker got stuck." [*Laughs*] I think hard work more than anything else. I forget who it was who said success is largely a matter of luck, but I find the harder I work the luckier I get. Those really are words to live by. The periods where I'm working very hard on the book and putting the majority of my attention into it, everything else just seems to fall into place around it.

You have to achieve a balance of being your own biggest critic and being your own biggest fan—[both of] which every artist has to be—and working very hard and not lying to yourself about your productivity. If you had a bad day and you screwed up and you didn't get the pages done that you thought you should, don't rationalize it away. Admit that you had a bad

day, and go in and have a good day tomorrow.

What was it that made you want to become a comic artist?

Comic books have always, except for very brief time periods in my early teens, been at or near the number one position in my life since I was 8 years old. The first big impetus to work in comics was figuring out the difference between [Superman artists] Curt Swan, Jim Mooney and Kurt Schaffenberger. That was really the first time I came to recognize the difference in styles. Their work motivated me to learn to draw more realistically, as opposed to adopting a stylistic approach to drawing comics. To this day, I want to create the same effect—you're looking at these events that are taking place on the comic page and you get swept up in the proceedings. You lose sight of the fact that you're just looking at somebody's drawings.

***Cerebus* initially started as a parody of Barry Windsor-Smith's work on Marvel's *Conan*, but it soon evolved into a much more complex book. What motivated you to take this direction with the comic?**

It was sort of an extended process from the time I decided to go monthly, around issue #14. I decided I wanted to do *Cerebus* until issue #300 because I didn't want to be 75 years old and racked with arthritis trying to do the next page, and I also didn't want to just do the character for another year or two until I got bored. Doing 300 issues seemed like a good compromise.

I also realized that I wasn't interested in filling those 300 issues with a bunch of individual stories. I wanted to do a graphic novel, which was a very new term at the time. The more I labored to get the kind of structure and characterization that you get in a really good novel into *Cerebus*, the more I started to see what else it was I wanted to cover in the series.

Most people must have been pretty skeptical that you'd be able to pull off a 26-year run on one title.

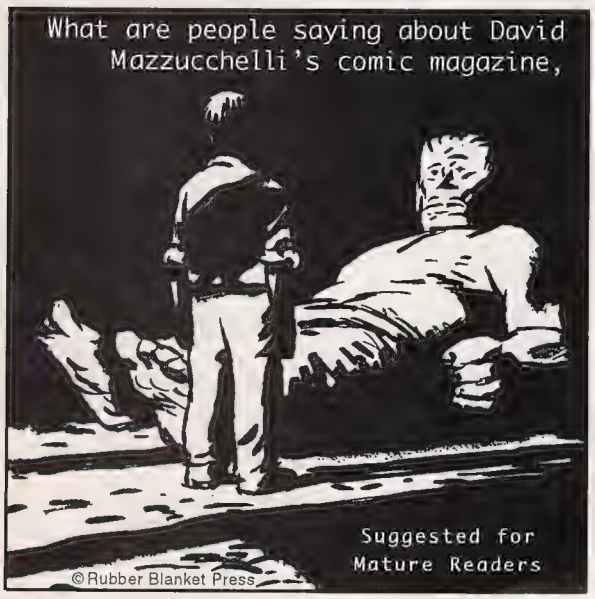
Yes, and I think rightly so. At the time, it seemed like a real pipe dream. I'm pretty sure that if I hadn't been the one doing it and someone said there's this guy who is going to do a 300-issue comic book series that is all one story, I probably would have said, "Well, he's just going to have to [stretch] it out."

I think now there's a kind of acceptance of it from Cerebus fans who have read the first 200 issues. They can look up and see how this is possible and this will actually be...something [*Laughs*]. I hope it will be the equivalent of a novel, but it's at least a step up from a hundred different artists doing their interpretations of a character.

Considering the success and longevity of *Cerebus*, it's obvious that self-publishing works for you, but why do you think it is a viable option for other creators?

I think it's worth a try. I will go so far as to say I think any creator, particularly any writer/artist or any writer/artist team, who finds himself intrigued by the possibility of it, that it would be worth their while to try it. They'll know pretty quickly whether it's for them or not. Having said that, I will acknowledge that self-publishing is not for everybody. But I think the only way you find that out is to actually do it.

In the past, Aardvark-Vanaheim published other creators' comics like Bob Burden's *Flaming Carrot* and Jim Valentino's *normalman*. You even started Aardvark-One, a separate company, to publish work like Stephen Murphy and Michael Zulli's *Puma Blues*. But *Cerebus* is now the only comic you publish. Why have you avoided publishing other creators' books in recent years?



RUBBER Blanket?

"...eloquent, quiet stories [and] striking two-color artwork."
Tom Palmer, *Wizard*

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Nick Wyche, *Overstreet's FAN*

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Rob Liefeld, at a NYC comic shop signing

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My sense is that with those two experiments there was a praiseworthy motive in doing it—I've been very lucky, I've been very successful and I'd like to pass this on to someone else. It took those two experiments and a good deal of thinking to realize that I wasn't passing on what I had gotten. I didn't go and find someone to publish *Cerebus* or to help finance the startup of *Cerebus*.

It would be very easy for comic book creators to [disagree] that advice is more valuable than money. Given the choice between having a wad of Dave Sim's information and a wad of Dave Sim's money, they'd probably rather have Dave Sim's money to start their comic book. But I think in the long term most people would rather do it themselves, once they find out the level of gratification [of] managing both the business and the creative side. It's very difficult for someone who's gone through self-publishing to go back to just getting a check from a publisher and going through the various stages of compromise or looking for approval at the various stages.

Do you fear *Cerebus* will become Charles Dickens' unfinished play *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*? What if you don't make it to #300 for some reason?

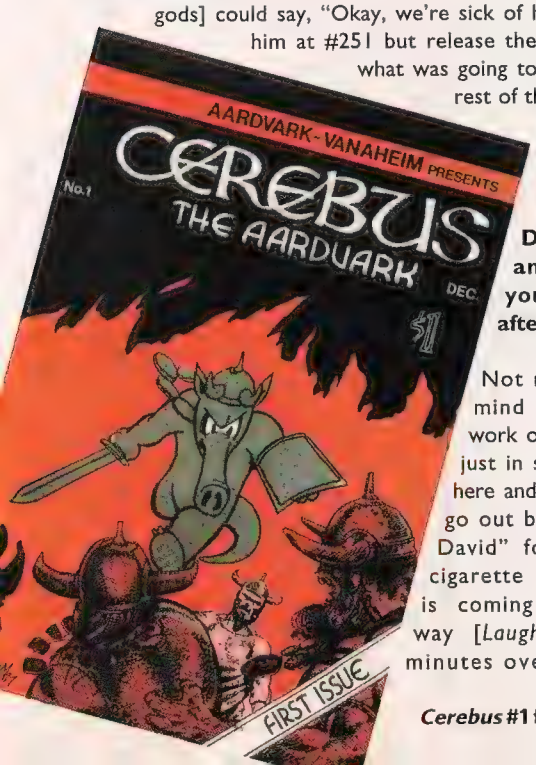
That doesn't concern me that much. I'm not someone who believes in coincidence *per se*. I tend to believe in synchronicity. If I suddenly developed inoperable cancer or got hit by a bus and I was paralyzed for the rest of my life, I would consider that a bad review of the issue I was working on at that point. I would certainly caution any aspiring comic book creator that if some disaster like that befalls me, look at what I was doing when that happened and don't do that in your own book. [*Laughs*] It will be easy to pick out because if something like that happens and I'm at mid-issue, the instructions are that the comic book gets printed with the rest of the pages blank. Look at that last page I drew because that's probably the point where the gods went, "No, I think we've had just about enough of this guy."

So there's no big vault where all the secrets of Cerebus are locked away?

Hell, no! [*Laughs*] That would give everybody an out. [The gods] could say, "Okay, we're sick of him. Get rid of him at #251 but release the transcripts of what was going to happen in the rest of them. We'll give it to Mike Allred. He can draw it."

Do you have any idea what you want to do after issue #300?

Not really, but my mind is starting to work on other stories just in stray moments here and there. When I go out back to "Camp David" for my hourly cigarette break—which is coming up, by the way [*Laughs*]; I'm nine minutes over, but that's



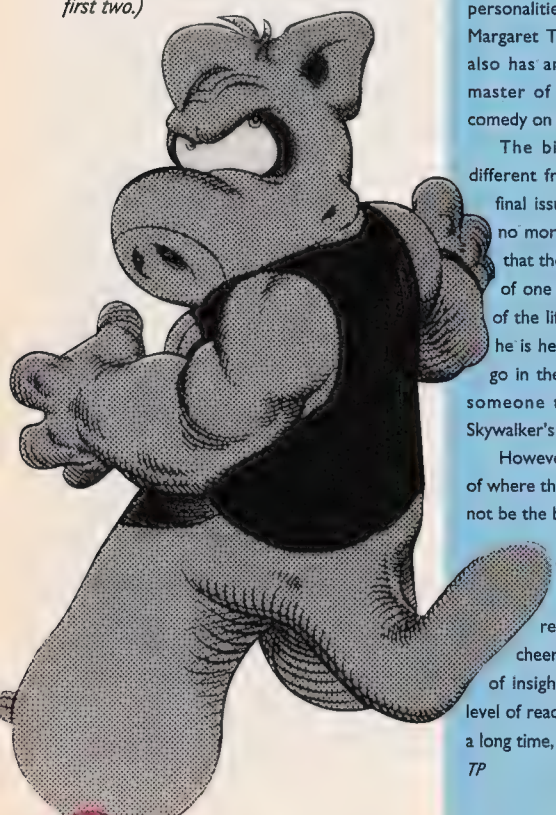
***Cerebus* #1 from 1977**

I can picture doing *Dave Sim Comics & Stories* after *Cerebus* is done. Maybe I could put out a 32-page quarterly comic or something like that, reprinting some of the stuff I did before *Cerebus* that I'm still kind of happy with, trying some new drawing techniques and things, doing some stories with Gerhard, doing some stories with other people. That, to me, would be very satisfying and a definite irreplaceable reward for having kicked it over the goal line with *Cerebus* #300.

Do you have anything to say to the people who thought you wouldn't make it this far?

Not especially. I've been very lucky in that a lot of things in the comic book field and the rest of the world have favored what I'm doing. I don't feel like gloating. I have a great sense of relief and accomplishment, and I am looking forward to the last 93 comic books I have to do in the series. I'm just grateful that it's gone okay so far, and I hope that some of the people who have doubted that I could do it have at least enjoyed what I've tried to do. **W**

Tom Palmer Jr., who tells ya all about the small press in his monthly "Palmer's Picks" column right here in Wizard, *is looking for a pet aardvark. (He lost the first two.)*



Catching Up with Cerebus

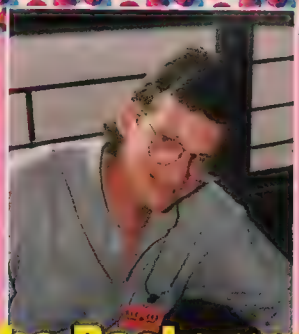
If you pick up a recent issue of *Cerebus*, you'll most likely find a gray aardvark with an eye patch (who happens to be called Cerebus) drowning his sorrows in buckets of Scotch. At least that's been the main thrust so far in the first few parts of "Guys," the current storyline in Dave Sim's monthly comic. But you can't blame Cerebus for wanting to get drunk all the time; he's just been on a journey through the solar system that answered questions from his past and brought him in touch with his creator. Are you confused yet?

Things didn't start out so complicated for the little guy. When he first appeared in the comic that bears his name in 1977 as a short aardvark with an even shorter temper, he was intended as a parody of Barry Windsor-Smith's work on *Conan*. His early adventures found him wandering from place to place in a fictional, medieval world, but he soon became entangled in events that led to his becoming Prime Minister (in the story "High Society") and even Pope (in "Church & State"). Throughout all of his experiences, Cerebus has held on to his headstrong nature, almost to a fault. He might not be the most lovable of characters, but at least he's consistent.

While the stories in *Cerebus* can get very serious and complicated, there are still plenty of exciting moments and hilarious characters. Most of the supporting cast is inspired by famous personalities like Groucho Marx, Mick Jagger, Margaret Thatcher and Foghorn Leghorn. Sim also has an expert ear for dialects and is a master of orchestrating visual and physical comedy on the comic book page.

The biggest thing that makes *Cerebus* different from other comics is that once the final issue, #300, is published there will be no more regular *Cerebus* comics. Sim claims that the main point behind doing 300 issues of one comic is to give a complete picture of the life of one character. For this reason, he is hesitant to reveal where the book will go in the next few months; it would be like someone telling you Darth Vader is Luke Skywalker's dad before you watch "Star Wars."

However, Sim is able to give a general idea of where the comic will go, even though it might not be the best of news for Cerebus. "You have to bear in mind that the last 100 issues document the end of Cerebus' life," Sim notes. "I don't really expect all of it to be too terribly cheerful. I hope that there will be a level of insight to it that will satisfy a maximum level of readers. A lot of them have stuck with it a long time, and they better have satisfaction." ■ *TP*



The Background of Gerhard

Many comic artists break into the business by inking backgrounds for established professionals, but very few make a full-time job out of it. Gerhard, Dave Sim's partner in crime on *Cerebus*, is the exception. He has been drawing the backgrounds behind Sim's characters every month since 1985.

Sim isn't too sure exactly when the two met, but he does remember the first time he saw Gerhard's artwork. "He drew the exterior of the Kitchener train station at night where all you could see was where the lights had illuminated and all the rest was left black. That was an amazing piece of work." Shortly after seeing Gerhard's work, Sim asked him to help with a series of color Cerebus stories for Marvel's *Epic Magazine*, which then led to his work on the monthly comic, starting with issue #65.

Gerhard's far from your typical background artist. While most background artists just ink what someone else has drawn, he fully pencils and inks everything except for the characters and lettering. "The characters are pretty much the way Dave puts them down on the page. It's my job to make it look like they're not floating three feet off the ground. Unless they're supposed to be, of course."

And what kind of impact does Sim think Gerhard has on *Cerebus*? "Enormous," he says. "He's the other half of the book. I might pay to go see Mick Jagger singing and Charlie Watts playing drums, but it wouldn't be a Rolling Stones concert."

Gerhard's work is also unique because he makes sure to get all the little details down. There is a distinct sense of time of day and setting that is apparent just from the way the characters interact with the backgrounds. If you see a specific building or a room once in *Cerebus*, you can be sure that it will look the same the next time you see it.

Paying such close attention to things is hard work, but Gerhard really doesn't mind. "I get to do the only thing I'm really better at than most people I know. I did very poorly through high school because all my notebooks were just full of sketches. Now I get to do what I really like doing, and you can't beat that with a stick." ■ *TP*

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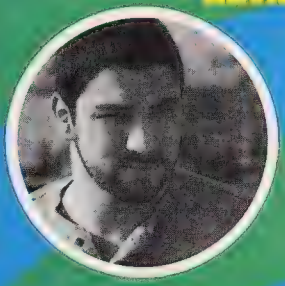

david lapham

terry moore

teri s. wood

james owen

small wonders

Wizard profiles the big guns of the small press

by marc shapiro

paul pope

rob schrab

He's not Frank Sinatra but *Scud: The Disposable Assassin* creator Rob Schrab is very fond of singing "My Way."

"I got tired of sending my portfolio to Marvel and Dark Horse and getting form rejections back saying that I didn't draw enough like everybody else. So I decided to just do my own thing."

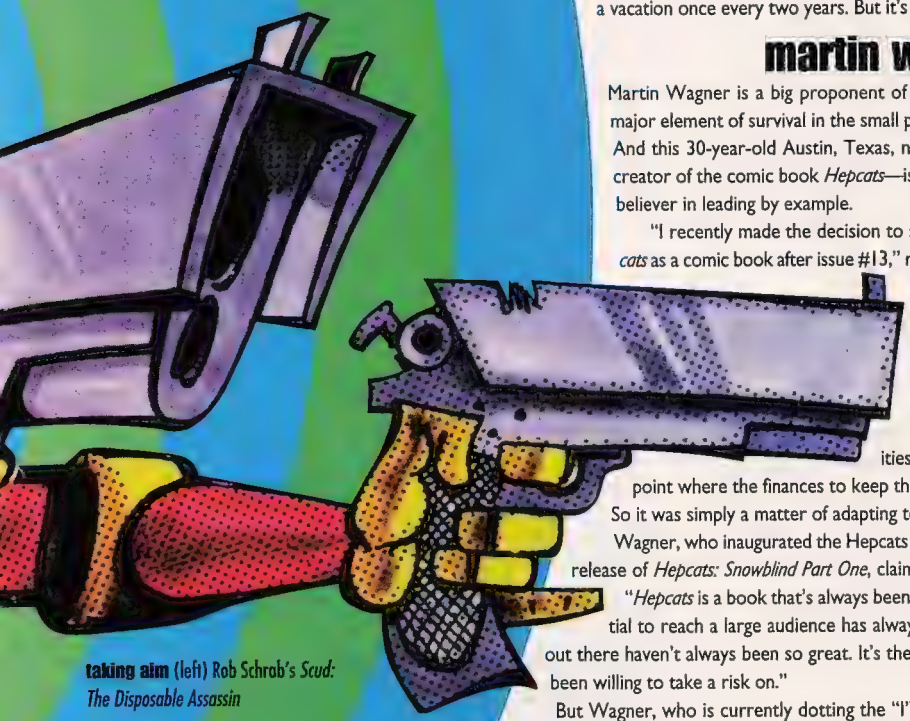
Schrab's thing, *Scud: The Disposable Assassin*, is currently spinning out issue #12, a primarily black-and-white wonder that, according to Schrab, has flown in the face of the prevailing retail opinion. "One of the hardest things in getting *Scud* off the ground was getting people to look at it," recalls the 26-year-old Milwaukee resident. "When you're a black-and-white comic that's not put on the same shelf as Spider-Man, you can get overlooked real easily. Store owners, in my humble opinion, have a prejudice against the independent press. It's easy to sell *Spawn* with the big covers and the big names but something like *Scud* you have to work really hard to make people read it."

Scud: The Disposable Assassin, which Schrab describes as his "very first anything," began in 1993 as his "childhood dream of doing a comic book and getting it out there."

"Getting *Scud* out there was a lot easier than I believed it would be," he continues. "Basically all you need is money and luck. The luck came in when I had enough friends who were willing to invest in the book. Then I met up with a printer who was willing to teach me the ropes about doing a comic and getting it out there."

Schrab, who recently released a *Scud* spinoff book called *La Cosa Nostroid* starring Scud's mobster pals and is currently working on another *Scud* spinoff called *Drywall Unzipped*, offers that "it's been one shot in the arm after another" throughout *Scud*'s run. "But when that all-color issue came out [reprinting *Scud* #1], it was like I had made it. I had finally arrived."

And arrived he has, into the tumultuous non-stop world of self-publishing. "I'm committed to the point of being militaristic. It's not a 9-to-5 job. I work weekends and I get a vacation once every two years. But it's all been worth it."



taking aim (left) Rob Schrab's *Scud: The Disposable Assassin*

martin wagner

Martin Wagner is a big proponent of change as a major element of survival in the small press arena. And this 30-year-old Austin, Texas, native—and creator of the comic book *Hepcats*—is also a firm believer in leading by example.

"I recently made the decision to suspend *Hepcats* as a comic book after issue #13," reports Wagner, "and will begin putting out Hepcats trade paperbacks every 12-18 months."

Hepcats: Snowblind Part Two, scheduled for publication in early to mid-'97, came about as the result of one of the harsh realities of self-publishing life. Cash. "It just got to the point where the finances to keep the book coming out regularly were not there. So it was simply a matter of adapting to keep the characters alive."

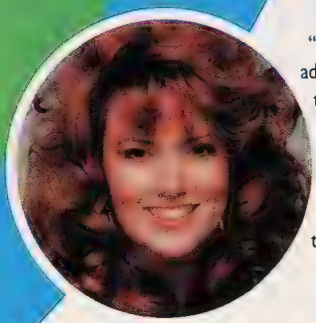
Wagner, who inaugurated the Hepcats trade paperback parade last summer with the release of *Hepcats: Snowblind Part One*, claims that his baby has always had a rough ride.

"*Hepcats* is a book that's always been oriented toward a cult audience. The potential to reach a large audience has always been there but the opportunities to get it out there haven't always been so great. It's the kind of book that a lot of retailers have not been willing to take a risk on."

But Wagner, who is currently dotting the "I"s and crossing the "T"s on a black-comedy-thriller comic called *Loving Couples*, is equally happy with the upside of the small press existence. "I've gotten to know a lot of good people in the small press and I've had the pleasure of having a lot of fans rally behind *Hepcats*. There are a lot of little moments that pop up that make this whole crazy experiment worthwhile."

Wagner's advice to would-be self-publishers is to go with your gut feeling.

"How you deal with it has a lot to do with your personality. But the willingness and the ability to adapt and change your game plan is real important. If it's not working one way then maybe you need to look at another way of presenting your work. Just don't give up or let anybody talk you out of it. Say, 'The hell with it,' and go ahead and do it anyway."



colleen doran

Colleen Doran has worked on everything from *Amazing Spider-Man* to *Captain America* to *Sandman* to *Legion of Super-Heroes*. But she literally lights up at the mention of her greatest hit, *A Distant Soil*.

Doran, whose *A Distant Soil* recently reached a milestone issue #12, the first with all-new material

(the previous issues have been mostly reprinted material), has a much traveled history with this self-publishing hit. The 32-year-old Virginia resident recalls drawing these characters at the ripe old age of 10, followed by her first written story at age 12. *A Distant Soil*'s first issue came out in the early '80s by way of WaRP Graphics. She left WaRP in '83 over what she describes as "a bitter dispute" and, with the encouragement of such small press types as Dave Sim (*Cerebus*), founded Aria Press and "made a lot of mistakes" before making *A Distant Soil* a top drawer attraction.

So much so, that it got the attention of Image Comics, which will start publishing the title in July. "Self-publishing is not more important than telling my story," she concedes.

Doran claims that marketing the sci-fi adventure comic through her company Aria Press kept her constantly in debt, and that several distributors were regularly late in paying her the money they collected for each issue. "I can do a quality comic in two months, but I can't get it out," the artist/writer adds, noting the many hardships of producing the book herself.

"I'm still semi-self-publishing," Doran notes. Image will produce enough copies of each issue to justify a lower printing cost, which she will still pay.

The book, which falls under Erik Larsen's corner of Image, will keep its black-and-white format when it switches over with issue #15. "There are absolutely no story restrictions. I'll have total creative freedom."

She says that Aria will continue to distribute *ADS* back issues and other products.

"I got to where I was by being intensely focused on a goal," she says. "It can be rough because you get so focused that, occasionally, you're blinded to the business side of self-publishing. But tunnel vision is a real necessity to succeeding.

"I'm not doing this to get rich," she says. "I just would like to tell my story, and keep a roof over my head while doing so."

james owen

James Owen broke his drawing hand shortly before he was set to put the finishing touches on issue #3 of *Starchild*. It was the luckiest break of his life.

"We were selling less than 800 copies of issue #2," recalls the reclusive publisher of Coppervale Press who refuses to give up his age or where he lives. "But the fact that I broke my hand gave us the opportunity to do *Starchild* #0 which had guest artists like Will Eisner, Dave Sim, P. Craig Russell and Paul Chadwick working over my rough sketches. And we ended up selling 45,000 of those suckers!"

Owen, with no small sense of ego, says that the consequence of selling like hotcakes on a regular basis really does not qualify as small press fodder. "We're not really working in the small press realm anymore. I can't really accept that term. I put out a *Starchild* collection last year that was a leather-bound, slipcased, big bells-and-whistles hardcover. A lot of independent books have better production values than the majors and their circulations are matching those of a lot of mainstream books. When we're talking small press, the only thing we're talking about is volume and I don't think that's enough of a difference to make the definition."

The genesis of *Starchild* was in an Owen-published independent effort, 1986's *Pryderi Terra*. "I was cutting my teeth and making a lot of mistakes," he admits. But the creator survived with ego intact. To the point that "if Marvel or DC came calling I wouldn't necessarily jump at it."

"It's been said that I have one of the healthiest egos in comics and I've taken great pains to safeguard that. I know what I have a reputation for and that's the reputation I want to keep. I don't want to be known as the creator of *Starchild* and a Batman pinup artist."

Owen, who has contributed three stories to *Negative Burn* but who claims he's "limiting my outside work to specific collaborations with specific artists," offers that he is far from the starving artist. "I definitely wanted to have happen what has ultimately happened. I've always had an aversion

to poverty. I hate being poor."

david lapham

He had spent four years toiling in the creative halls of such companies as Valiant, Defiant and DC. But it was not frustration that saw David Lapham drop it all to embrace the self-publishing terrors with *Stray Bullets*.

"I enjoyed doing work for other publishers and I learned a lot," says the serious, yet candid, 25-year-old New Jerseyite. "My giving that up for the insecurity of self-publishing was more of an evolutionary thing. I just felt it was time for me to tell my own stories."

The rugged individualist that has surfaced in the tales of *Stray Bullets* has gone on to be one of the more pleasant surprises in recent comic book history. Sales are good; the buzz has always been high on Lapham's book. But the self-effacing creator is taking the success of *Stray Bullets* in stride.

"Sometimes I feel like we're still working on turning the corner with all this," sighs Lapham. "It's a real up and down thing when it's your own business. The money goes in, the money goes out. When we started out, we weren't sure what to expect. We didn't know whether we would sell 30,000 copies or 3,000. I felt we would be on the right track with *Stray Bullets* if we could sell 8,000. But we got quite a bit of attention right away. Everybody who read the book seemed to like it. So it's not so much that we've turned a corner in that we've continued to move forward."

Lapham turns downright fatherly when it is speculated that his recently announced film deal might, in fact, be a movie workout of *Stray Bullets*. "No, that deal has nothing to do with *Stray Bullets*. I consider my comic to be a comic and that's the best format for it. And that's all *Stray Bullets* is ever going to be."

Lapham laughs softly at the irony of the mainstream comic overtures that are flowing like wine as *Stray Bullets*' stock has risen. "It's really weird. Everybody wants to bring me back and make me conform back into this little niche. If I wanted to go back and do mainstream superheroes I could. The opportunities have definitely been there.

"It's funny. You tell people, 'No, I don't want to do that.' But when you say that, that's when everybody wants you."

teri s. wood

If they gave purple hearts for injuries suffered in the self-publishing wars, *Wandering Star* creator Teri S. Wood would have a chest full.

"I'm a perfect example of what to do and what *not* to do in self-publishing," laughs the 30-year-old, self-described "very bad businesswoman" from her digs in Banning, Calif. "I like the people I deal with so I don't like to invoice them, which is a very bad thing to do. I can't keep track of paperwork. I let people get behind in paying me. When some of the distributors went under recently, they went under owing me thousands of dollars. But I've learned. My advice? Invoice everybody! Make sure you get paid! And if people don't pay you, call them!"

Wood's gateway to these headaches began in 1987 when her love for "Star Trek" inspired her original work, the sci-fi adventure series *Wandering Star*. "I just kind of pulled the whole idea out of the stars. I don't know where the heck it came from!"

Funding *Wandering Star* was no less of an adventure.

"I was working at Vons [a local grocery store], so I was able to save some money and I was also able to get a very small loan," she chronicles. "But I ran out of money after the first two issues and I thought, 'How in the hell am I going to get enough money to keep this going?' The loan was a good idea initially but, when you can't pay back the loan, that's when you run into trouble."

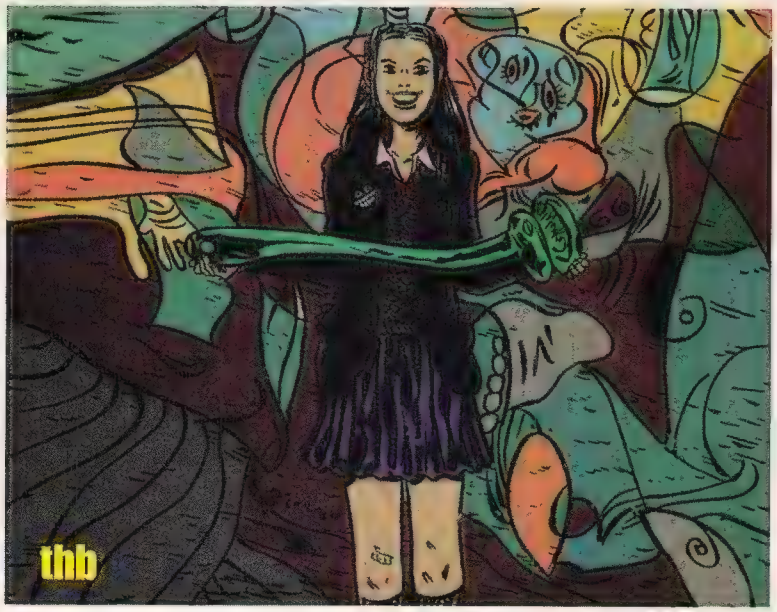
Wood persisted. At one point she called individual retailers and sold them signed back issues at a really big discount just to pay off some bills and keep *Wandering Star* wandering. On the up side, *Wandering Star* has continued to be a critical hit and a welcome addition to fans' reading lists. But the creator is candid in saying that the ride has seldom been smooth.

"Sales go down when you think they should be going up. Money gets tight so things come out late. Issue #11 just barely came out. But the desperation and the determination just keeps you going. You go into self-publishing and small press wanting very much to tell your stories and, knowing all the while, that it's going to be hard to survive. But you keep at it because you want to do it so badly."

Wood, whose work has appeared in DC's *Sandman: A Gallery of Dreams*, issues of *Amazing Heroes* and Revolutionary Comics' Rock 'n' Roll line, is going through some changes. *Wandering Star* will stop wandering, she reports, with issue #19 sometime next winter. She is already hard at work

on a new book *Dark Light* which she describes as "a fantasy/horror book with lots of mythology and ancient history." But most importantly, Wood will no longer be self-publishing *Wandering Star*, which has been picked up by Sirius Entertainment with #12 shipping in April. The series, plagued by lateness, will also go monthly. She claims the move is doing wonders for her creative piece of mind.

"Things are definitely easier now that I've signed with Sirius," she chuckles. "Now they have to worry about all the surviving. All I have to worry about is telling the story."



terry moore

Terry Moore had no illusions about his place in the comic book universe when Antarctic Press agreed to publish the first issue of *Strangers in Paradise*. "I was a nowhere name, this was a nowhere book and they were a [publisher] that not a whole lot of people were paying attention to. The book was put out with no advertising or promotion. It was just dumped out there."

But a funny thing happened on the way to what Moore initially perceived as an E-ticket ride to comic book oblivion. "Six weeks after the book came out, I got a call from Antarctic saying that they wanted to reprint the first issue because it had sold out. Antarctic had never reprinted a book before. So I said, 'Okay, maybe we've got something going here."

Moore, a 41-year-old living in Houston, is a pretty opinionated sort in his own quiet way, especially when it comes to his feeling that comic book creation should be a solitary occupation. And it comes with experience.

"I worked in advertising agencies for 15 years and came out of that with the opinion that the most horrible attempts at creativity come from teams. New ideas come from one person at a time which is why the quality tends to be so high with the independent publishing. Self-publishing works so well because it's people with their ideas and nothing getting in the way of that idea."

Strangers in Paradise, with issue #10 recently out of the hopper, has benefited from that rarity in the small press: instant success. "I've never needed backers and I take great pains to get this book out regularly because I know it's important. I'm damned lucky to be in this position and I'm not going to take it for granted."

Moore's luck has extended to the big guys sniffing around his talents. He's just signed on the bottom line to do *Lady Supreme* for Image Comics' Extreme Studios and has done a "Wolf & Red" story for Dark Horse's *Tex Avery's Comics and Stories*, a pinup for Vertigo's *Sandman: A Gallery of Dreams* and a story arc for Vertigo's *The Dreaming*. He acknowledges that more and more small press types are "being swallowed by the mainstream" but looks at it as a unique situation.

"I have my own book and I'm going to keep doing it. But my approach has caught the attention of other people and so it has allowed me to walk into other people's houses. It's definitely a good place to be."

paul pope

"It really never occurred to me to try and get work in comics," says 25-year-old Ohio resident Paul Pope. "Self-publishing just seemed to make a lot of sense."

And for the soft-spoken Pope, making sense meant creating the on-the-rise *THB* from what he offers is very personal scratch. "Personality dictates the level of the work and the acceptance it will have," explains Pope who sounds like he has more than a nodding acquaintance with philosophy and theory. "If you're talking about big guns of the small press, you're talking about hard working, original minds."

Pope says that *THB* has been "at least a decade" in its gestation period prior to Pope getting down to serious work in '93. "I went to the local library and checked out some books on publishing. Then it was simply a matter of making sure *THB* projected my loves, hates and personality and that it was something truly unique."

He claims that *THB* turned the corner around the time of issue #6 but recent developments in Pope's professional life have given him a greater perspective on the freedom the small press provides. For Pope, by his own estimation, has had "offers to work from everybody except Marvel." He is developing a 12-part serial for *Dark Horse Presents* and is currently working on the Japanese manga comic *Mongo*.

"When you're dealing with corporations, the process is very slow and a lot of people have to approve everything you do. In the last few months, I've come to understand the importance of self-publishing. Which is the total creative freedom for the artist to put as much daring and risk onto the page as possible."

Marc Shapiro, who wrote about Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld's future Marvel plans last issue, wonders if small press folks actually print their comics on teenie weenie li'l presses.

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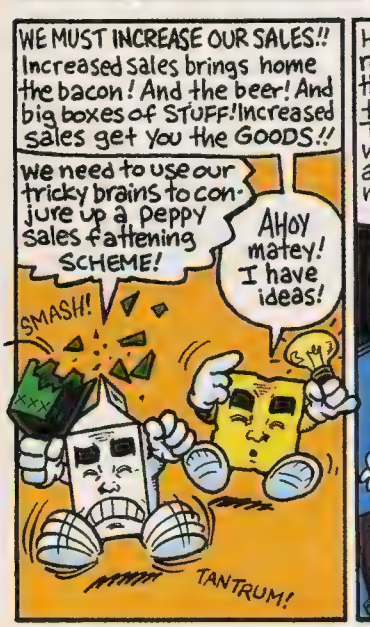
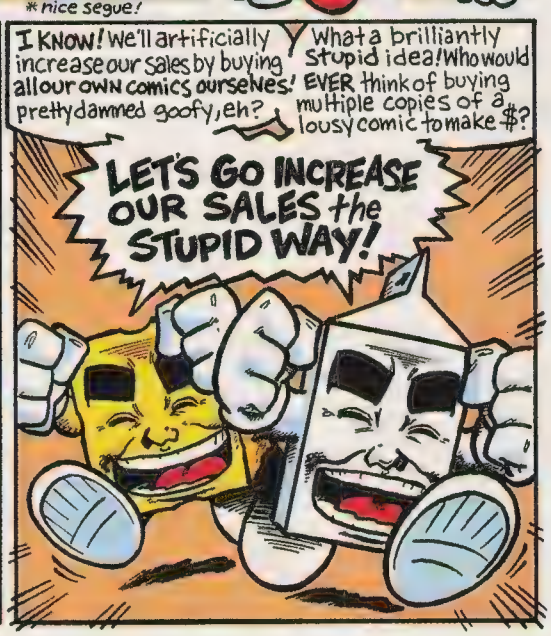
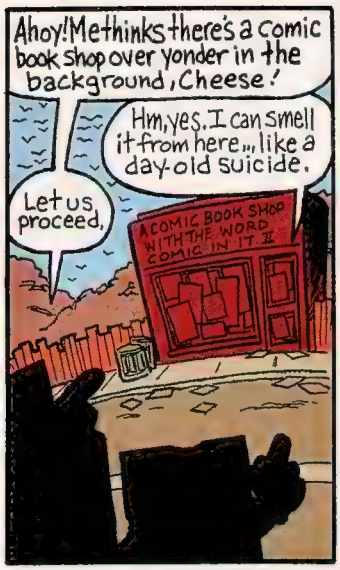
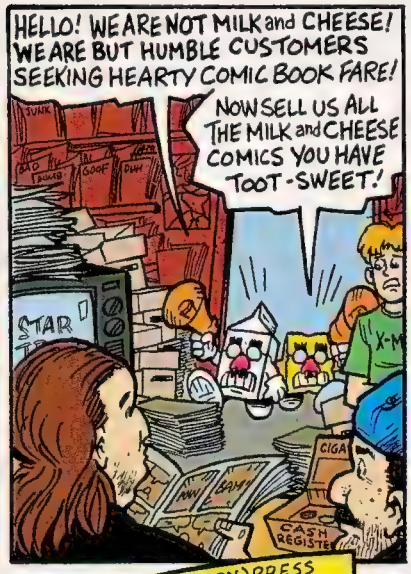
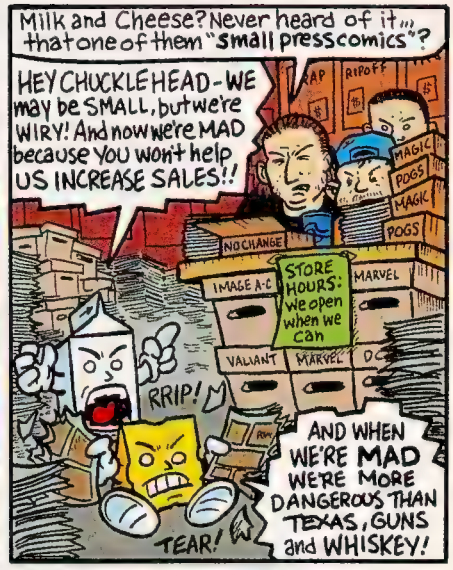
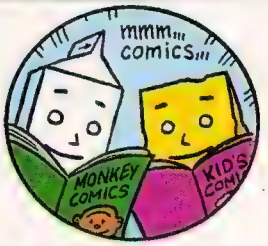


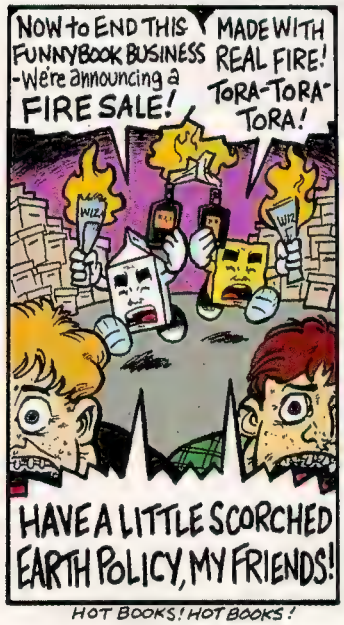












NEXT! DESTROY ALL DISTRIBUTORS! KILL ALL CARTOONISTS! PUMMEL ALL PUBLISHERS! FRY ALL FANBOYS!!!

The Visit To Paradise Contest

Comb your hair real nice; here's who you're hitting on:

Francine: She's neurotic and nervous, and probably lacking a bit of self-confidence, but still real lovable. She's a bit fragile and emotional, but still cute as a button.

David: He's the cute-as-a-button, sensitive-guy type. He's romantic, caring, a good listener and he never sugarcoats how he feels. Oh, yeah. He's got glasses.

Katchoo: She's impulsive and feisty, and usually acts without examining the consequences. But she's a good, loyal friend. Did we mention she's cute as a button?

How To Play

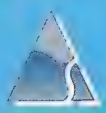
Tired of heroes in capes and heroines with their butt cheeks hanging out of thong-bikini costumes? Then try reading *Strangers in Paradise*, the much-acclaimed series from Terry Moore. It's a comic about basic human (and basic dysfunctional) relationships that also happens to be one of the most well written comics out there today. Give it a read, get to know the characters and you just might win a trip to Paradise!

Okay. So what the hell does that mean?
What that means is that we want to set you up on a date. The three main characters from *Strangers in Paradise*—David, Francine and Katchoo—are all available. Read a bit about them, tell us (in 100 words or less) which one you'd like to go out on a date with and why, and you just might be able to visit Paradise. Check out the Grand Prize for details.

Grand Prize (1): One reader who gives us good enough reasons why they should win a *Strangers in Paradise* date will actually win a date with the character of their choice! You'll win a *Strangers in Paradise* walk-on and have your likeness drawn into a future issue of *Strangers in Paradise*! Our lawyers will make you sign a release form in blood, but that's okay. And just because Terry Moore is such a nice guy, he'll even give you the original art page on which you appear! Oh, yeah. He'll throw in an autographed copy of *The Collected Strangers in Paradise* paperback and a box of Comic Images Strangers in Paradise trading cards. Look for the cards in the fall.

Second Prize (10): Ten potential suitors who are pretty groovy, but don't quite make the cut, will receive a copy of *The Collected Strangers in Paradise* paperback autographed by Terry Moore and a box of those swell cards. Oh, yeah, and they'll be stuck home on Saturday night.

This contest is sponsored by Terry Moore's Abstract Studio and Comic Images. We'd go to dinner and a movie with them any time.



Fill this sucker out, attach it to your entry, put it in an envelope and send it off to: Visit to Paradise Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Deadline is June 28, 1996.

Chaperoned Legal Text

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Abstract Studio, Comic Images, John Milton and their immediate families. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach it to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Visit to Paradise Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Katchoo! Gesundheit! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 28, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on quality and creativity among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press and Abstract Studio. Judging will take place on July 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after July 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Visit to Paradise Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Visit to Paradise Entry Form

DEADLINE IS JUNE 28, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

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City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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Did you attach your entry?

Basic Training

this month's host: Jimmy Palmiotti

How to Ink a Comic Book—Part One

INKERS ARE THE ENIGMA OF THE COMIC BOOK MACHINE. Writers create worlds with words, and pencilers bring the writer's thoughts to the blank page. What does the inker do? For the longest time, it's been said that inkers just trace the pencil art and don't know how to draw, nor have any need to.

But inking isn't tracing. There are unique and diverse styles of inking, and it's good to put your own style on the page, providing you're building upon the penciler's strength. If the penciler's strength is physical anatomy and musculature, that's where you should concentrate the most. The harmony of the inker's style playing off of the penciler's strengths is what creates the best penciler/inker teams.

The Starting Line

Before starting to ink, the first thing I do is tape down the original art page (which is 11-inches by 17-inches) and rule out the borders around panels. To rule your borders, you should use the technical pen (I use a .07 point pen). For me, this is merely an organizational quirk.

Then I concentrate on what I'm going to ink first. I take a few minutes to study the page in order to determine its strengths and weaknesses. Don't be intimidated by the page if there's a lot of things going on. Pay attention to the figures first because a reader's eye goes to them first, not the tree in the background. They're there to put us in a place, and to establish a time of day or a mood.

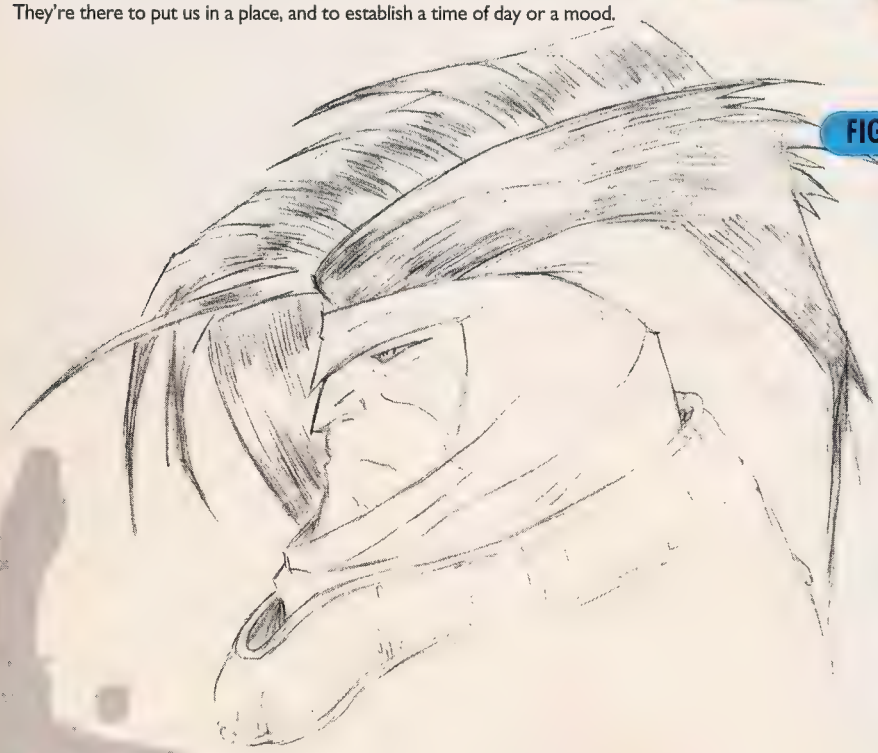


FIGURE 1

Choosing Your Weapons

Figure 1 is a penciled head shot of Future Ash by Joe Quesada. The penciling is tight. These are called finished pencils. Different inkers have different preferences as to which tools they use and I'm gonna give you examples of each.

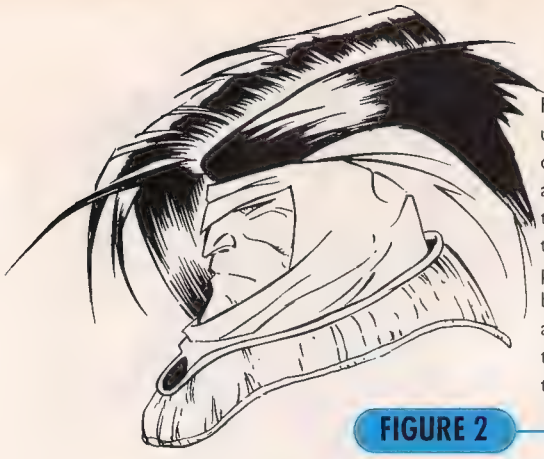


Figure 2 is the inked figure, using a Hunt 102 crow quill only. As you can tell, the lines are sharp and crisp. As we get to the hair area, because of the fine point of the dipping pen, it's tough to fill big solid black areas. The crow quill is a great tool for detail, but not that great for anything featuring long, flowing lines.

FIGURE 2

Figure 3 is the same drawing as in Figure 2. This time, it's inked with only a brush. This drawing has a slicker look to it than the previous one; these differences are very subtle. When a comic page is shot down, you don't tend to notice all the little nuances in the inking. The drawing just seems to register in our brain as "I like it" or "I don't like it." The lines are a little broader with the brush, but I prefer to use both tools, which brings us to...

FIGURE 3

Figure 4 is inked with both the crow quill and the brush. I inked the hair with the brush, and most of the details around the face and collar with the crow quill. I prefer to use both tools but it's an individual choice. It's just my interpretation of the lines put down by the penciler. Joe's drawing doesn't have a real light source, other than what's indicated in the hair and the line around the nose and cheek, so I'm not really indicating any heavy lights, darks or shading.

FIGURE 4

The first three examples show how different tools can change the look of a piece. The differences aren't drastic, but you'll want to experiment to find out which combination of tools works best for you.

JIMMY'S TOOLS OF THE TRADE

You can find all the following equipment in a good art supply store:

• **Jet Black India Ink**—I've been using Faber-Castell's Black Magic brand lately. Ink (not unlike a woman) is very temperamental; you never know what you're getting. Two bottles of the same brand can have completely different consistencies. It's always good to test out a bottle of ink first, and try different brands to see which one you prefer.

• **White Paint**—I recommend Pro White and the Pentel Fine Point Correction Pen. These two will handle everything you need to in terms of whiting things out and making corrections.

• **Kneaded Eraser**—This is what you clean your pages up with. I recommend, in addition to the kneaded eraser, a Stadtler-Mars brand plastic eraser, which you'll use for those stubborn pencil lines.

• **Brush**—For me, it's a Series 7 Windsor & Newton Finest Sable hair brush. A #3 is my personal preference, but some prefer a #2. The #3 holds more ink, which makes the work go by faster, but some feel that the #2 gives them more control on the page. I DO NOT recommend going to your Mom's watercolor set and using the brush in there. Just because a brush comes to a point when you look at it, doesn't necessarily mean it's a good brush. There's a reason the sable brush is used by every inker out there—it's the best. It costs around $25, but it's worth it because these brushes can be used for up to a year. It's made of hair, so I clean it like I clean my hair—I shampoo it.

• **Crow Quills**—These are very important. I use the Hunt 102 crow quill and holder; it costs about $2. This is the dipping pen. It has a wedged tip on it, and it works by putting pressure on the pen to control line weights. I use them for technical lines, for outlining things and for those hard-to-reach spots a brush can't get to. It's always good to have a lot of the pen nibs on hand, because they always snap.

• **Technical Pens**—These are good for ruling lines, especially for beginners, but should not be used on the figures. The pens should be used for oval and circle templates. I recommend either Koh-in-Noor or Faber Castell brands. Pen sizes should be 0 and higher (the 00 and 000 sizes won't reproduce when the page sees print, so don't use them).

• **Templates**—Use oval templates, circle templates, triangles and a French curve set. These are very important, especially the ovals. You'll use the oval templates for every tire, kitchen table and speed line. Buy the templates that are raised from the surface, so that the template won't smear the ink you've just put down on the page.

• **Rulers**—You'll need a raised metal-edged ruler. Like the templates, the ruler should be raised with cork so you can rule lines without sliding the ruler and smearing the lines. Rulers aren't cheap, but they'll last forever.

• **The Inking Surface**—You'll need an angled drawing surface, such as a drawing board. An angled surface allows you to get a more full-on look at the page. The surface should also be well lit, so a lamp is essential.

• **Tape**—A roll of white art tape is necessary to hold down what you're inking, as well as to mask certain areas you're inking off. Also: securely tape your ink bottle to your drawing surface so it doesn't spill.

• **Misc.**—I keep a little dish with a sponge and water in it, and a paper towel or rag next to my desk. These are used to clean the brush and crow quill while you work.

Now that you've spent your life savings, you're ready to start inking!

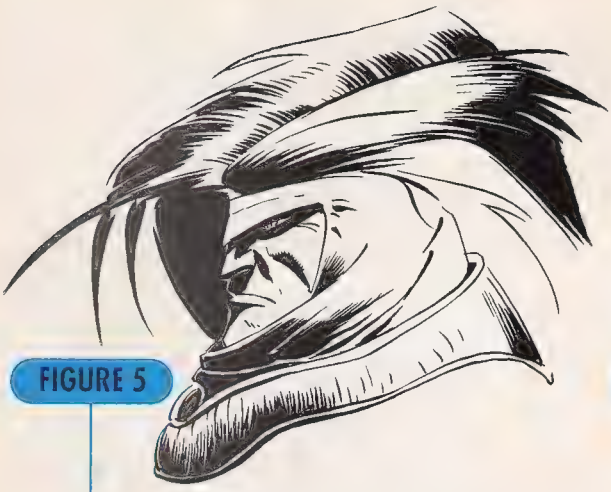


FIGURE 5

Figure 5 is done with pen and brush. I gave it a light source (directly above the figure), and gave a different look to the drawing. What I did in this figure is called doing finishes on a piece, but we'll cover doing finishes in a bit. What I'm trying to show is how to take the same drawing, and make it look drastically different. I've made it more sinister looking, by being more creative with the line weights. An inker will really have to know how to draw to be able to do something to a drawing like this.

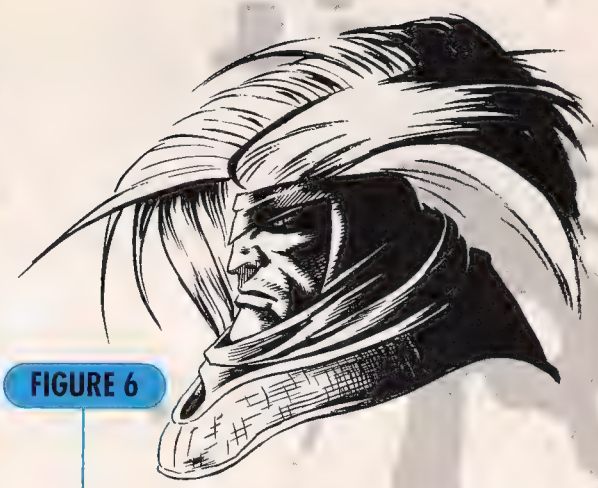


FIGURE 6

Figure 6 is another example using pen and brush, but this time we threw an additional lighting source (from the front of his face) into the mix. This will show texture on the skin and on the shoulder pads. Granted, it's the same drawing, but this time we're giving it a whole new look by adding texture.

PRO INKER HELPFUL HINT: This technique is not recommended for the beginning inker.

Figures 5 and 6 are examples. I would not feel free to do this to anybody's work. I get paid to interpret the pencils as close as I can, not to make drastic changes to an artist's pencil work. It's okay if it's a conscious choice you both agree on. Your job as an inker is to interpret the pencils as close as possible. You can follow the examples in Figure 5 and 6, and have a lot of fun inking your first comic...but you'll never get work again.

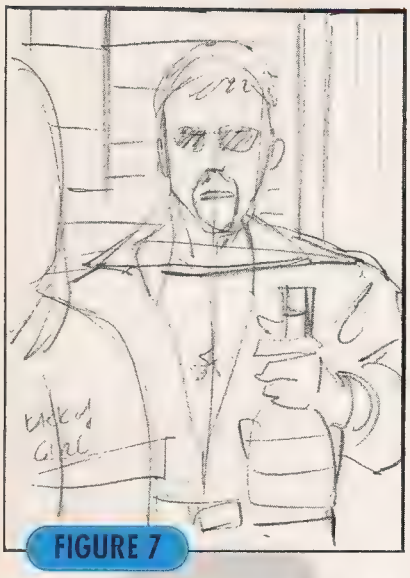


FIGURE 7

Doing Finishes

Inkers do "finishes" when they're presented with pencil layouts, not finished pencils. Inkers will get pencil layouts when the penciler is short on time to do complete pencil art, or when the job is an emergency job (what we term a "Rush Job").

You need to have a firm grasp of drawing in order to do finishes. Usually, when you get handed an assignment to do finishes, it shows that the editor has confidence in your inking, or he was drunk at the time of the assignment.

Breakdowns are unfinished pencils, as shown in Figures 7 and 8. This means that the penciler doesn't go in and tighten everything up. There are two kinds of breakdowns: loose breakdowns and tight breakdowns.

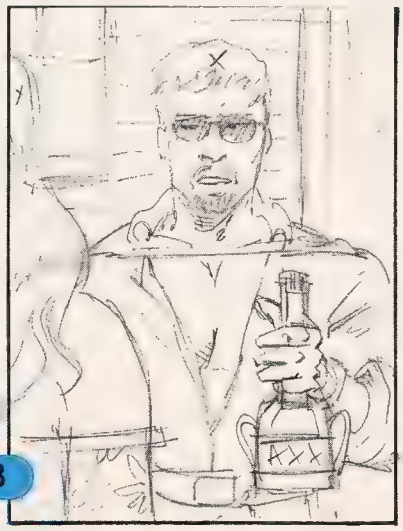


FIGURE 8

The first example (Figure 7) is one of loose breakdowns, which indicates a figure holding a bottle in back of a girl. Sometimes the penciler will just write in "back of the girl" right on the drawing to indicate what's going on in the panel. Notice there's no lighting in this piece.

The second example (Figure 8) is that of a tighter breakdown which has all the information you need—though the background isn't ruled out and the tight details aren't being included. Your job as an inker will be to go in and tighten up the pencils so that the piece looks like a slick, finished drawing.

FINISHES #1

• Finishes #1—This is where I took the tight breakdown, and inked it in. I ruled in the background, and separated the foreground image (the girl) from the background. This means I used a thicker line around the girl, and a thinner line around the guy. I also did some brushwork in the hair. I kept it somewhat simple for the example, but you can see how a drawing ability is necessary here, judging by how I went in and worked on the nose and the cheeks.

FINISHES #2

• Finishes #2—On this piece, I used a different technique. I back-lit the guy in the background, blackening the male figure. And then in the foreground, I outlined her figure but left her fairly open for interpretation by the colorist. I also put a white outline around her shoulder, which separates her from the male figure. (I did this to insure that the piece looks good in black-and-white before heading off to the colorist. Don't take the colorist for granted—always make sure the figures separate in black-and-white.)

FINISHES #3

• Finishes #3—In this example, I blackened the foreground (the girl), as well as dropped out the flowers on her dress. From there, I went dark on the background in order to pop the middle-ground figure (the guy) right out. This gives a different feeling to the male figure as all the attention is directed to him.

Next month, I'll conclude teaching you how to ink. Among other things, I'll divulge inking tricks and tips, as well as the use of zip-a-tone as an inking tool. Until then, keep your nibs wet and your brush in a safe place. W

Jimmy Palmiotti, when not threatening innocent cats, can be seen inking his and Joe Quesada's Ash, *along with a ton of other comics.*

HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

All of the following figures were made from plain old, ordinary figures (and some even from scratch!), and each of these gifted creators will receive a copy of *Cable #16* signed by Larry Hama and a copy of *The Crow: Dead Time #1*. The Runner-Up will get a Crow vinyl model kit in addition to the above goodies, and the Grand Prize Winner runs away with all that stuff *plus* a limited-edition The Crow cold-cast porcelain statue. Good going, everybody!

Thanks to the folks from Inteleg, Kitchen Sink Press and Top Dollar for their generous donation of prizes. You people are the fat-free butter on our popcorn!

GRAND PRIZE

THE WINNER

FRED SHEPPARD

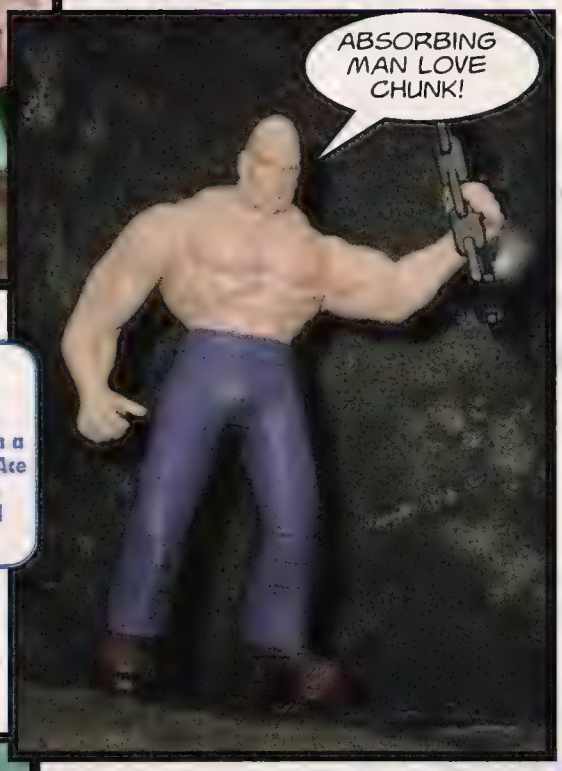
BOBA FETT
Fred Sheppard of Lark Harbour, Newfoundland, Canada
Standing at a whopping 24 inches tall, this bounty hunter was completely homemade, utilizing cloth, paper, paint and some serious sewing techniques.

RUNNER-UP

GOLDEN AGE GREEN LANTERN
Charlee Flatt of New Port Richey, Fla.
This was made from a Mego doll's body, hand-sculpted head and hand-sewn cape. Toss in an actual miniature green lantern and you've got a cool figure.

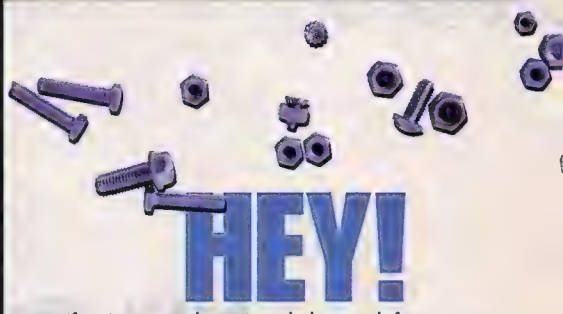
PITT
David Black of Danville, Va.
He was crafted from a WildC.A.T.s Maul figure with molded Super Sculpey for hair.

ICON
Reginald Marrow of Greenville, N.C.
This Milestone hero was made from a Toy Biz Grey Gargoyle figure, plus an original Spawn cape.



ABSORBING MAN
Paul Herwick of Climax, N.Y.
Ready? This guy's head and torso were taken from a Toy Biz Krule, the arms from a Kenner Terminator figure, shoes from an Ace Novelty Stone Protector, chains from an unnamed Cadillacs & Dinosaurs toy, and homemade legs. (Whew!)

FLAMING CARROT
Brian Child of Corona, Calif.
This guy was made from a Toxic Avenger figure with lots o' clay for that head.



HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, description of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

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a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

Ten Small Press Books You Should Own

Everybody knows about *Cerebus*. You've probably heard a lot about *Stray Bullets*. And it's hard not to notice *Bone* now that Jeff Smith has joined the Image gang. It seems like everybody is paying attention to the small press these days, but there are still some really great comics that not many people know about. Some of them are no longer published, and some have been around just as long as, or even longer than, the big guns of the small press. They might not enjoy a big audience from the general comic reading community, but they draw on a different crowd who might not set foot in a comic store. To make things easy for you, I've gathered together 10 comics (in alphabetical order) that I consider to be the best of the rest of the small press. Now all you have to do is bug your local comic store to carry them.

Dirty Plotte (1991-present)—Julie Doucet isn't the first female cartoonist to unflinchingly present a woman's dreams and imaginings in a comic, but she is certainly one of the best. Her boldly innovative cartooning is endearing, and there is a dreamlike rhythm to her narratives that will mesmerize you. A good place to start with the *Dirty Plotte* series would be the latest issue, #9, which features a full-length story about all of the weirdos Doucet encountered at art school.

Eightball (1989-present)—Dan Clowes' slick art and darkly humorous stories have earned him a reputation as one of the best, and weirdest, cartoonists around. *Eightball* has featured a wide range of stories in different styles and techniques, like the surreal "Like a Velvet Glove Cast in Iron," the lethal satire of the comic industry in "Young Dan Pussey" and "Ghost World," the story of two teenage girls' summer vacation. A good thing about *Eightball* is that the mix of serialized and self-contained stories makes it easy to pick up any issue, so don't forget to reserve a copy of the next issue (#17) when it comes out in July.

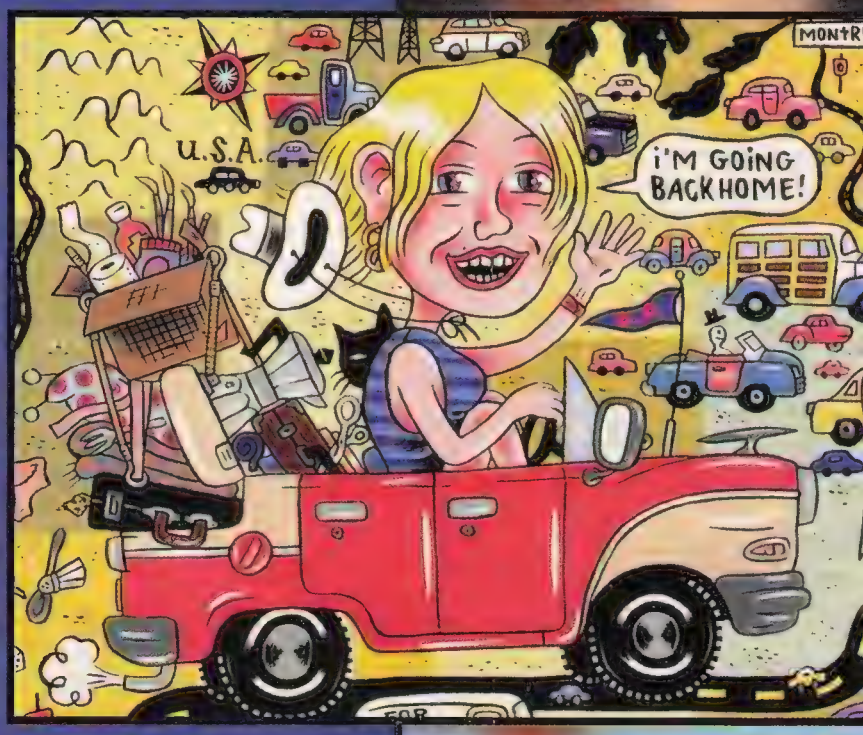
Hate (1990-present)—Peter Bagge's *Hate* is one of the few comics that gets better with every issue. Aside from being a hilariously funny chronicle of the slacker generation, *Hate* offers keen insights into family life in America. And to top it off, Bagge's in-your-face cartooning is even in full color. If you've already been following *Hate*, look for some pretty wild developments as life gets even weirder for its protagonist Buddy Bradley in New Jersey (if such a thing is possible).

Hutch Owen's Working Hard (1994)—Tom Hart took his Xeric Grant money and put it to good use when he published this impressive graphic novel about the life of Hutch Owen, a unique outsider who turned his back on society and moved to the woods. Hart's spare cartooning style will grab you right away, but don't be fooled; this story will stay with you long after you've finished reading. But beware: This story also has more four-letter words than you can shake a stick at. If you're hankering for more Tom Hart, be on the lookout for *The Sands*, his regular series from Black Eye Productions this summer.

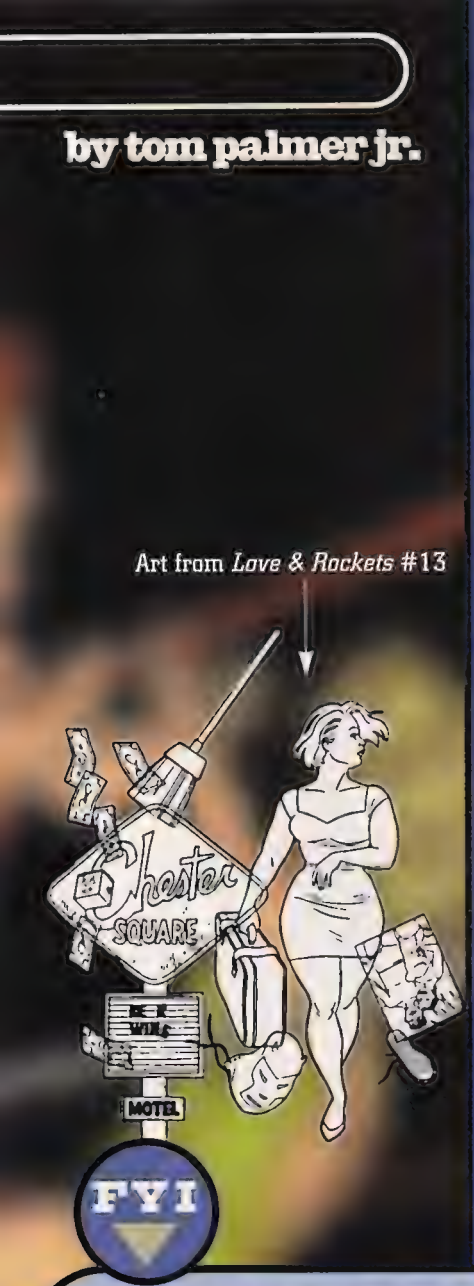
Jar of Fools (1994-95)—It's too bad there aren't more comic books like the two-issue *Jar of Fools* by Xeric Grant winner Jason Lutes. Through the story of Ernie Weiss, a down-and-out magician, Lutes gives you a well-drawn story with convincing characters that

We all know about *Cerebus* and *Bone*, but here's the best of the rest of the small press

Cover art from *Purty Plotte* #9



by tom palmer jr.



Art from *Love & Rockets* #13

you'll instantly care about, and he even wraps the whole thing up with a satisfying ending. The first installment of Lutes' new project, *Berlin*, should also be in stores now.

Love and Rockets (1982-96)—This landmark series from Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez has influenced a host of cartoonists, and has remained at the forefront by combining enthralling stories, strong female characters and innovative storytelling. Just about every issue is split into two stories, one telling about Gilbert's fictional Central American country Palomar, and the other dealing with Jaime's collection of post-punk Californian characters. Some highlights include Gilbert's gangster epic "Poison River" and Jaime's classic "Mechanics" from issue #2. Sadly, *Love & Rockets* is coming to an end in March, but Los Bros. will return this July, each with their own new mini-series (before they launch into regular series). Gilbert will start with the three-issue *Girl Crazy* and the six-issue *New Love*, which will focus on short surreal stories with a continuing serial, "Letters from Venus," about a young girl who collects comic books. Jaime weighs in with *What, Nelle!*, a three-issue series featuring his wrestling characters, before moving on to his regular series *Penny Century*.

Rubber Blanket (1991-present)—David Mazzucchelli could have taken the easy road to success after his acclaimed work with Frank Miller on *Batman: Year One* and *Daredevil: Born Again*, but instead he chose to start *Rubber Blanket*, an oversized avant garde anthology. Even more impressive than the lush production values of *Rubber Blanket* is Mazzucchelli's maturity as a storyteller, evinced by stories like "Discovering America" in #2 and "Big Man" in #3.

Taboo (1988-95)—Before he became famous for drawing dinosaurs, Steve Bissette published *Taboo*, one of the groundbreaking anthologies of the late '80s. *Taboo* stretched the boundaries of what horror comics could be (provoking some customs officials in the process) by giving a home to stories like Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell*, Jeff Nicholson's *Through the Habitat*, and the disturbed scrawlings of underground shock-master S. Clay Wilson.

Yummy Fur (1986-95)—Chester Brown always seems to set the comic community on its ear. He shocked just about everybody with the no-holds-barred stream-of-consciousness "Ed the Happy Clown" storyline. Then he made a 180° turn with stark autobiographical stories like "The Playboy" and "I Never Liked You," in his old, long-running series *Yummy Fur*. He has also confounded his readers with his new series, *Underwater*, which is written in a new language Brown invented. Early issues of *Yummy Fur* would be a good place to start to get a taste of Brown's off-beat humor and minimalist cartooning.

Zot! (1984-91)—Back when everybody was trying to be grim and gritty, Scott McCloud reminded us that superheroes could still be fun. Even when the comic got serious with the "Earth Stories" and the spotlight moved away from Zot (a teenager from another dimension) to focus on the supporting cast, *Zot!* remained a fascinating read. You won't have to rummage through the back issue bins for old copies of *Zot!*, though, now that Kitchen Sink Press is reprinting the entire series, beginning with a full-color volume of the first 10 enjoyable issues this July. W

Stranger than ever before, Tom Palmer Jr. is a drug against war. He's also the guy who wrote the Dove Sim Q&A on page 58.

For more information on *Dirty Plotte* and *Yummy Fur*, write to Drawn & Quarterly Publications, 5550 Jeanne Mance Ste. #16, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4K6. To get the scoop on *Eightball*, *Hate* and *Love & Rockets*, call 1-800-657-1100 for the Fantagraphics catalog. To find out about *Jar of Fools* and Tom Hart, write to Black Eye Productions, 5135 Parc Ave. #5, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4G3. Call 1-800-365-SINK to get Kitchen Sink's catalog and more information on *Taboo* and *Zot!*. And if you need to know about *Rubber Blanket*, write to Rubber Blanket Press, P.O. Box 3067 Uptown Station, Hoboken, NJ 07030.

Recommended Reading

Exit Nabiel Kanan is a talented new cartoonist, and his comic book, *Exit*, is definitely something to pick up. The stories in *Exit* are of the slice-of-life variety, but everything is given that extra touch by Kanan's stylized minimalist artwork and expert sense of timing. Probably the only drawback to reading *Exit* is all the black ink on the pages; it leaves weird smudges on your fingertips. If you can't get *Exit* locally, call Caliber Press at 1-800-346-8940 to find out how to get a copy. There are three issues available, as well as a trade paperback collecting the first eight-issue story arc that Kanan self-published.

A World of Trouble Jeremy Eaton is breaking new ground with recent stories in his comic *A World of Trouble*. Most notable of these is "Quiet Charlie," where he tells the tale of Charles Gleason, an actor who played Tarzan in silent films and was forced out of his job with the advent of movies with synchronized sound. Gleason's silent world is told through a series of fake newspaper clippings, and a comic story supplemented by a text story. With its interesting combination of different techniques, "Quiet Charlie" is one of the few stories that can only be told effectively in comics. For more information on *A World of Trouble*, write to Black Eye Productions, 5135 Parc Ave. #5, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4G3.

TRAILER PARK

Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

GENERATION X: THE TV SERIES?

By Rob Allstetter

WILL THE SERIES STAR THE SAME CAST FROM THE MOVIE—AND WILL IT BE BETTER?

What's next for Generation X? Perhaps a weekly TV series.

After the Fox telefilm based on the Marvel mutants aired on Feb. 20, the network placed "Generation X" among its development slate of 33 possible series for the 1996-97 television season. New World's Bruce Sallan, an executive producer of "Generation X," told *Wizard* that discussions are continuing with Fox.

"It's very much alive at Fox," said Sallan. "There's a very good chance for it to continue. We could also possibly take it somewhere else, but we feel Fox is kind of our family."

The Generation X movie tied for 72nd place out of 108 programs in the Nielsen ratings for the week of Feb. 19 to 25, and placed third in its time period. More encouraging is the fact that the movie was first in its time period in the male 18-34 and teens demographics, and outperformed Fox's season-to-date Tuesday night movie average by 11 percent.

"It did well in the ratings, but it didn't go through the roof either," said Sallan. "We did really well with publicity—we got a nice piece in *TV Guide*—but were hoping to do a little better in total households. But those demos are very good. Networks like Fox, Warner Bros. and UPN really like those demos. I don't see ['Generation X'] as a mainstream network [CBS, ABC or NBC] show."

Sallan said he would prefer "Generation X" to be a weekly series, as opposed to occasional movies, especially from a business standpoint, because ancillary products would sell easier from a weekly show. Sallan noted that, despite the special effects demanded by a Generation X series, he felt it could be pulled off well on a weekly basis.

"I think it should be a series," added Marvel's Avi Arad, another executive producer of the film. "Fox should put it on Friday nights before 'X-Files,' and they could have an 'X-Night' every Friday."

Fox said casting for a Generation X series will be announced. Although several members of the movie cast told *Wizard* they would like to do a series, sources indicate that not all of the cast members would necessarily return.

"I definitely would want to do more," said Amarilis, who played Monet. "It could make a great series."

Eric Blakeney, who wrote and executive produced the telefilm, would continue to work on a Gen X series. Fox is expected to announce its primetime lineup for the fall in May, and while it's difficult to nail down how good Gen X's chances are, there's also a possibility of its becoming a mid-season replacement later in the year.

Meanwhile, Sallan said budgets and final rewrites are being worked on for New World's Black Widow and Nick Fury films for Fox. "'Black Widow' will probably be the next one," Sallan said. "Hopefully, we'll be shooting ['Black Widow'] this summer in Paris."

Mel Friedman and Christopher Cosby have written the Black Widow script. Sallan said that compared to the other Marvel telefilms, the TV version of Black Widow will be "more of a departure" from the current comics version. No cast news is available as of yet.

Here's how Fox described the film, which is on its schedule for next season: "A wildly successful magazine publisher by day and crime-fighting avenger by night, Black Widow will stop at nothing to bring down Octopus, the worldwide crime syndicate responsible for her father's death."

MIGHTY MARVEL UPDATE

Studio sources told *Wizard* that actor Wesley Snipes may push the Blade, the Vampire Hunter movie up on his schedule after another project he was attached to fell through. The Blade movie, written by David S. Goyer, is at New Line Cinema, and if a director is signed for the project, it could begin filming by the end of the year. On a side note, the Whistler character used in Blade's appearance on the Spider-Man animated series

Generation X photo courtesy of Fox-TV

was a creation from Goyer's movie script.... "Spider-Man" and "X-Men" continue to be powerhouses for Fox's top-rated Saturday morning lineup. The shows tied for first place in the February sweeps for viewers ages 6 to 17.

'ANGELS' IN AUGUST

Mirimax will release "The Crow: City of Angels," the sequel to 1994's "The Crow," in early August. The movie, directed by Tim Pope and starring Vincent Perez (above), is in post-production and should be completed by May. There has been no official announcement on the soundtrack to "City of Angels," but since Iggy Pop is in the movie, he's likely to contribute. Sources told *Wizard* that it's likely several female artists will also be involved.

RETURN OF THE DRAGON

The Savage Dragon animated series, based on Erik Larsen's hit Image Comics character, will return for a second season of 13 new episodes on the USA Network beginning Sept. 21. Executive Producer Scott De Las Casas told *Wizard* the series will be "much improved in many ways.

"We're using a different design group," he continued. "We're spending more money on it this season, and it will look considerably better. The level of animation will be quite higher."

Bob Forward joins Duane Capizzi and Dean Stefan as the main writers, and Chris Bartleman ("Felix the Cat") is the new director.

"We're going to take a different tact with quite a few episodes," De Las Casas said. "We're going to try and depart from the standard Saturday morning formula as far as storytelling. It will have a little more of an NYPD, film *noir* style to it. Not too much over the edge, obviously, because we have a young audience. But there will be some significant and noticeable differences in some episodes."

She-Dragon will appear in several episodes of season two. Overlord, Fiend, Arachnid and Doubleheader will be back, and there will be numerous villains new to the animated series.

"We're using quite a few villains that Erik had in the comics recently," De Las Casas said. "We're trying to use as many villains from the comics as possible, even the incidental villains. They're interesting, and some of them work real well in animation."

De Las Casas said the key voices for the series, including Jim Cummings as the Dragon, will remain the same.

"Both Dragon and Alex [the policewoman on the show] worked very well," he said. "Even though the Dragon's voice was not the traditional Saturday morning voice, I believe the actor who portrayed him really got into the character, and a lot of the quirkiness and one-liners he delivered very well."

HEADING TO THE USA

Joining Savage Dragon in the USA Saturday (11 a.m.-1 p.m.) lineup are three video game-based series. "Street Fighter" returns for a second season, and premiering this fall are "Mortal Kombat: Defenders of the Realm" and "Wing Commander Academy."

The "Mortal Kombat" series, from Threshold Entertainment, will emphasize the Asian and Native American mythology aspects from last summer's theatrical film.

Voices on "Wing Commander Academy" will include Mark Hamill, Dana Delany, Malcolm McDowell and Tom Wilson. The series, from MCA Family Entertainment, focuses on a series of pilots in training who are entrusted with the

Crow photo courtesy of Dimension Films

FREEZE!
HERE'S YOUR BATCAST

Chill out, Batgeeks! Arnold Schwarzenegger added the icing to a long, frequently confusing casting process for "Batman and Robin"—the fourth live-action movie in the series—when he signed to play Mr. Freeze, one of the film's two villains. Schwarzenegger is joined in the cast—released March 12 by Warner Bros.—by "ER" star George Clooney as Batman, Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy, Chris O'Donnell as Robin and Alicia Silverstone as Batgirl.

"The Terminator meets the refrigerator," smiled director Joel Schumacher after Schwarzenegger's signing added even more box-office muscle to the Batman franchise, for what promises to be an extremely competitive summer of 1997.

Schwarzenegger is starring in this summer's "Eraser," another Warner Bros. release. He will film "Jingle All the Way" for 20th Century Fox and producer/director Chris Columbus before production on "Batman and Robin" begins in September.

At one point, when it was unclear if Schwarzenegger could fit "Batman and Robin" into his schedule and pay range, both Bruce Willis and Sylvester Stallone were mentioned for the part. The Hollywood trades even reported that Stallone was so upset with his agency, ICM, for not pushing him for the Mr. Freeze role that he left them. Stallone denied the reports at a press conference touting "Copland," a small-budget film from Mirimax that he hopes will steer him away from action movies into more serious roles.

"I was actually as surprised as anyone was to read [the reports]," said Stallone, whose "Judge Dredd" last summer was a box-office disappointment. "I had no intentions of ever doing that film ['Batman and Robin']."

Clooney, of course, replaces Val Kilmer in the Batsuit. The primary reason for Kilmer's departure from the series was said to be scheduling conflicts with his lead role in the filming of "The Saint." But there were echoes of many of the same reasons why Michael Keaton had left before him: not enough money, his role being overshadowed by the villains and the possibility of being typecast.

"Batman and Robin" will be Clooney's third movie in succession. He's currently filming "One Fine Day," opposite Michelle Pfeiffer, and then has "The Peacemaker" for DreamWorks before the Bat-film. The actor insists he will not leave "ER" and will fit the TV show into his movie schedule; both "Batman and Robin" and "ER" are produced by Warner Bros. He was quoted in the March 30 *TV Guide* as saying, "It's scary to take over a role from two other actors [Kilmer and Keaton], who probably have done it better than me."

Most of the cast members didn't figure to be on board when plans for "Batman and Robin" were originally announced last fall. Patrick Stewart was first mentioned for Mr. Freeze, Demi Moore and Julia Roberts were thought to be in the running for Poison Ivy, Kilmer was signed as Batman and Batgirl wasn't even known to be in the film. The twists and turns continued for weeks, but Schwarzenegger seemed to cement the cast and spark official comment from Warner Bros.

"Batman and Robin" is being written by Akiva Goldsman, who co-wrote "Batman Forever." Tim Burton, who directed the first two Batman movies, returns as executive producer, along with Benjamin Melniker and Michael F. Uslan, while Peter Macgregor-Scott is back as producer. The tentative release date for the film is June 5, 1997; we'll keep you posted on the exact date and any further star news.

task of saving mankind during the 27th Century's interplanetary war.

"Savage Dragon" and the three previously mentioned shows will also be rerun on Sundays. USA has also acquired five shows from Bohbot for its Sunday (7-11 a.m.) lineup: "UltraForce," "Mighty Max," "Double Dragon," "Street Sharks" and "Action Man."

"WildC.A.T.s," which USA showed in reruns this past season after it was canceled by CBS, will not return to the network. WildStorm Productions' Jeff Mariotte told *Wizard* that Nelvana, which still has TV rights to the characters, is trying to hook up with another company to share the production costs of any new WildC.A.T.s shows.

MORE LOIS, MORE CLARK

With ratings of steel, "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman" will be back for a fourth season. ABC has given a 22-episode, full-season order to Warner Bros. for the Sunday night hit.

"'Lois & Clark' has continued its steady growth this season, and we're especially pleased the series has improved ABC's performance in its time period by six percent over last season," said Ted Harbert, president of ABC Entertainment.

The series ranks 20th among 145 network shows this season for total viewers and 22nd for viewers ages 18 to 49. "Lois & Clark" is first in its time period for total households, as well as the teens and 18-49 demographics.

ZEN WILL BE COMING TO ACTION-FILLED LIFE SOON

ENEMY PILOT APPROACHING

Production of "Enemy," a two-hour movie pilot for the Fox Network based on Steven Grant's Dark Horse mini-series, began in late March. The movie is written and executive produced by David S. Goyer ("The Crow: City of Angels") and directed by Michael Cattleman.

Billy Wirth ("Body Snatchers," "Boys on the Side") stars as Malcolm Cory/Enemy. Others in the cast are Lisa Waltz as Quillan, Marshall Bell as Dane and Brad Tatum as Wilbur/John Doe.

Grant said "Enemy" is a "political action/thriller" focusing on a military officer who undergoes a disastrous gene-therapy treatment.

"It's about a male/female team of FBI agents—mind you, this was before 'X-Files' was ever heard of—hunting down a man who originally appears to be a serial killer, only to find the men he's going after all have a common past, and that 'the Enemy,' as the agents label him, is being led to his targets by the ghosts of the people they've killed," Grant said. "The agents then become targets for the same people Enemy is hunting.

"They've modified Enemy's origin somewhat, but the TV show seems very close otherwise to the mini-series, so I'm feeling—hopefully justifiably—proud."

THE LATEST ZEN ACTION

Brian Yuzna, the director of "Bride of the Re-Animator" and producer of such films as "The Guyver" and "Re-Animator," has been lined up as director of "Zen Intergalactic Ninja—The Movie." Zen co-creator Steve Stern said the live-action film is expected to go into production in July from Sceneries Entertainment, with a starting budget of $6 million, and a distributor is expected to be named soon.

"I believe [the budget] might go up, and Brian Yuzna is an absolute wizard with budgets," Stern said. "My belief is that it will look like it has a much more significant budget. Between what you can do with video toasters and how affordable technology is rapidly becoming, and with a true visionary like Brian Yuzna, I'm not feeling the pinch in the least with the budget."

The movie will be produced by Philippe Diaz of Sceneries and executive produced by Mark Freedman, president of Surge Entertainment. The script, completed more than a year ago, is by Chris Solimine.

"Chris is a deep-thinking kind of a writer," Stern said. "I would categorize the script as a thinking man's action/adventure. It's really very different than any other movie script that I can remember being adapted from a comic book medium. It's going to be loaded with action as much as the hero is a ninja of cosmic proportions."

There was no casting at press time, although Stern said a well-known actor's voice could be attached to Zen.

In addition to the likely PG-rated movie, Zen is being developed into 26 half-hour episodes of an animated series by Ellipse, a production subsidiary of France's Studio Canal Plus, and Enoki Films of Japan. "To my knowledge, this is the first hybrid cartoon series that is created from the get-go for a global audience," Stern said.

SHORT TAKES

George Lucas recently moved up the new release of *Star Wars* from Feb. 21, 1997 to Feb. 14, 1997....**Phil Collins** has signed to write and record songs for Disney's animated **Tarzan** movie, scheduled for a 1998 release....Fox's **"Doctor Who"** film will air on May 14, at 8 p.m....Production was expected to begin in April on **"Prince Valiant,"** a live-action movie based on Harold Foster's long-running comic strip character. The film, due in the summer of 1997, will be produced by Constantin Film and Lakeshore Entertainment with Paramount Pictures distributing. The cast includes Stephen Moyer, Katherine Heigl, Thomas Kretschmann, Ron Perlman, Udo Kier and Warwick Davis. Anthony Hilcox and Carsten Lorenz co-wrote the screenplay, with Hilcox directing and Lorenz producing....."Heaven's Prisoners," the action thriller starring **Alec Baldwin** ("The Shadow") and **Teri Hatcher** ("Lois & Clark"), is due May 3....The **United Paramount Network** has announced times for its new Sunday morning lineup, which starts on Sept. 8. "The Mouse & The Monster" is scheduled at 9 a.m. (ET), followed by "Jumanji" at 9:30, "Incredible Hulk" at 10 and "B.A.D." (Bureau of Alien Destroyers) at 10:30....**The Cartoon Network**, the fourth-highest-rated cable network, has gone over the 25 million mark in total households carrying the network. A gain of 900,000 households in March propelled the network to 25.6 million total households....Bat-news: The **Batmobile** from 1989's Batman movie was purchased at an auction in Los Angeles in late February for $189,500. The owner bought the car anonymously, but was later revealed as illusionist **David Copperfield**. **"Batman Forever,"** which was nominated for three Academy Awards (Best Cinematography, Sound and Sound Editing) was completely shut out at the Oscars on March 25. And **Julie Newmar**, one of three actresses to play Catwoman on the Batman TV incarnation of the 1960s, had a guest spot as herself on an episode of "Melrose Place" in March....**"Hellraiser: Bloodline"** placed fifth at the box office with $4.5 million in its opening week, and then fell out of the top 10 the next week. W

Rob Allstetter really likes his "Enemy" headline.

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More Guests To Be Announced

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THE TOY CHEST

KEEPING UP WITH KENNER

Last month's "Toy Chest" contained a special report on Toy Fair '96, bringing you a look at the coolest upcoming figures from the big guys. But there was so much neat stuff and so little space, that we ran out of room. So this month, we're spotlighting what's on deck from the mighty minds of Kenner.

STAR WARS: SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

If you haven't heard of Shadows of the Empire, you will very soon. Between "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Return of the Jedi," the story of Shadows of the Empire takes place. The notorious Darth Vader and the crime lord Xizor engage in a bitter battle for control of the galaxy that further threatens the survival of the Rebel Alliance. It's up to Luke Skywalker, Chewbacca, Princess Leia and Dash Rendar to keep their cause alive.

The Shadows of the Empire tale will ultimately be told through a novel from Bantam Books, a comic series from Dark Horse, a Nintendo video game and, last but not least, an action figure line from Kenner.

The initial Shadows of the Empire basic figure assortment, due for release this spring, will include Luke Skywalker in Imperial Guard disguise, Chewbacca in Bounty Hunter disguise, Dash Rendar and Xizor. Luke comes with a removable helmet and battle staff, while Chewbacca is armed with his vibro-axe and blaster cannon. Dash sports a shoulder-mounted blaster rifle, while the evil Xizor is equipped with his energy blade shields. The suggested retail price for each figure is $4.99.

In addition, Kenner will release two different two-pack assortments, retailing for $11.99 apiece. The bounty hunters Boba Fett and IG-88 are paired together as is Xizor with Darth Vader. Both assortments will contain an exclusive *Shadows of the Empire* comic book from Dark Horse.

Let's not forget the vehicles! Look for a Swoop Vehicle with an exclusive Swoop Trooper figure, Dash Rendar's Outrider, Xizor's Virago and Boba Fett's Slave I. Retail prices range from $9.99 for the Swoop Vehicle to $24.99 for the Slave I starship.

BATMAN: TOTAL JUSTICE

An exciting collection of action figures will be issued throughout 1996 in Kenner's new Batman: Total Justice line. Batman forms a team known as Total Justice to battle the dastardly Darkseid and his band of supervillians. To counter Darkseid's advanced technology, Earth's mightiest superheroes are equipped with Fractal Tech Gear which enhances their powers.

Six figures will make up the line's initial offering. Wreaking havoc with his capture claw is the evil Darkseid. Total Justice Batman is outfitted with leg armor thrusters and a wing-transforming cape, while a Ninja disc launcher is the main weapon of Total Justice Robin. The Flash's speed is intensified with leg turbines and arm armor thrusters, while Green Lantern comes equipped with a shoulder sensor to help locate enemies. Aquaman, getting what seems to be the short end of the weapons stick, is only furnished with snap-on back spikes. Mere back spikes to fight the mighty and powerful Darkseid? Yeah, right. To keep Aquaman from being eaten by a monster clam is more likely.

Kenner will also be introducing new figures to the current lines of Batman: The Animated Series, Batman: The Animated Series—Crime Squad, Batman Forever and Batman: Legends of Batman. The suggested retail price for all figures in the Batman lines is $5.99.

l to r: Darth Vader and his bitter rival Xizor from the Shadows of the Empire line

l to r: Aquaman and Darkseid from Kenner's Batman: Total Justice line

Above: The Flash is ready to give Aquaman a hand in taking down Darkseid!

SUPERMAN ANIMATION

This fall, be on the lookout for action figures from the new Superman Animation line, retailing for $5.99 each. The Man of Steel will be produced as six different figures, and it's a sure bet that collectors will love the Quick Change Superman which changes from Clark Kent to Superman in a split-second.

The main features of the remain-

BY DAN ALBAUGH

ing Superman figures are: Capture Net Superman—double-barrel bola launcher; Deep Dive Superman—underwater blaster; Krypton Shield Superman—capture claw; Neutron Star Superman—deep-space travel wings; and Solar Energy Superman—energy cables.

Figures of Superman's archenemies include Brainiac, Darkseid and Lex Luthor. Brainiac travels in a command sled loaded with thrusters and a launcher. Lex Luthor battles Supes with a launcher and snap-on Kryptonite armor. Darkseid comes equipped with a spring-loaded missile launcher.

The deluxe figures, which will retail for $9.99 each, include Speeding Bullet Superman with a glider launcher, Techno Armor Superman with a pivotal projectile launcher that ensnares villains, and a Vision Blast Superman with light-up eyes and chest emblem.

Alien Supreme Commander from Trendmasters' ID4 line

Also available at a suggested retail of $24.99 is Clark Kent's Matrix Conversion Coupe. The well equipped vehicle, which comes with an exclusive Clark Kent figure, transforms into a deep space jet.

The existing Superman: Man of Steel line will continue with new figures being added throughout 1996.

DRAGONHEART

Scheduled for a May 31, 1996 release, Universal Pictures' "Dragonheart" will star Sean Connery and Dennis Quaid. In conjunction with the movie, Kenner will be producing a "Dragonheart" action figure line.

The basic action figure assortment ($5.99) includes the following good guys: Bowen with a spike-studded uniform, crossbow and spear launcher; Brave Knight Bowen with a battering bola tripod; Kara, the female warrior with her ax-chopping combat cart; and Hewe, a comrade who is equipped with a boulder-launching catapult.

The bad guys include evil King Einon and his charging crossbow blaster, and Felton, a henchman with a spinning battle blade and mace.

Three dragon figures ($9.99) will also be available: Medusa, the two-headed dragon; Razor Thorn and his battle reactive spikes; and Draco with his flapping wings. For about $29.99 you can own an electronic Draco, which lets you see and hear the dragon's heart beat and, when the heart is pressed, the poseable Draco emits a mighty roar. Also available, with a $39.99 price tag, is a Dragonheart Castle Playset.

KENNER NEWS AND NOTES

Kenner is looking to break Mattel's stronghold on key licensing rights to Walt Disney's animated releases. The two rivals are currently battling to become the master toy licensee for Disney's 1997 animated release "Hercules."

The exclusive offer for a Han Solo Stormtrooper figure from Kellogg's Froot Loops expires on December 31, 1996. It was initially reported in this column (*Wizard* #55) that the offer expired in 1995.

ID4

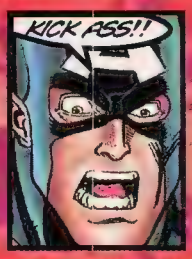
Yeah, I know this is an all-Kenner column, but these Trendmasters toys look so cool, I had to share 'em with you. Coming this summer, just in time for the July 4th theatrical release of "ID4" starring Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum and Bill Pullman, comes the ID4 toy line. The alien action figures assortment includes an Attacker Pilot, Science Officer and Army Trooper, all of which are fully poseable with bendable tentacles. The coolest figure, however, is the giant electronic Alien Supreme Commander who's also fully poseable with six bendable tentacles. But when you try to open its head, it emits an alien shriek that's sure to scare you off (or at least your little pooch). There's also a human assortment including computer whiz David Levinson, President Thomas J. Whitmore complete with two firing missiles (now *that's* presidential action!) and marine pilot Captain Steve Hiller. Also look for a number of vehicles, micro battle sets and an Aliens Destroy L.A. Playset. **W**

Dan Albaugh eats corn. And lots of it!

WISH LIST

THE 10 ACTION FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

(AND SOON)



1) Captain America (Marvel Heroes)
Second-month running as the toy we wanna see made most is good ol' Cap, ridin' high on the Waid & Garney monthly book. Toss in a shield-slingin' action and this is one figure that'd move!

2) Princess Leia in Slave Get-Up (Star Wars)
Not in her classic white outfit, as Boussh, or in Bespin garb, but in that hot slave outfit Jabba dressed her in with removable choker chain.

3) Bizarro (Superman)
With official Bizarro mussed hair, Billy Idol-raised lip and removable Clark Kent-ish glasses tie and tattered jacket.

4) Guardsman (Iron Man)
With neat shiny armor like alla them highly reflective Iron Man figures (but not in removable chunks like them highly annoying Iron Man figures) and "The Vault-approved" supervillain cuffs and restraints.

5) Havok (X-Men)
Slidin' slowly down the charts is Havok in his original black suit with light-up energy rings on his chest.

6) Molten Man (Spider-Man)
All shiny and reflective like the Marvel Heroes Silver Surfer (but gold!) with heat-sensitive coating that turns "molten" red from your body heat when you touch him.

7) Wendigo (Hulk)
Big, muscular and NO "real" fur (it never ends up looking good) with assorted bones and skulls. Like the Savage Hulk figure, he should come with a scrawny human you can fit inside, so you can "cure" the curse of the Wendigo.

8) Azrael (Batman)
With pop out blades and snap-on gauntlet flames just like the neato second Iceman.

9) Grand Moff Tarkin (Star Wars)
With official "Evacuate? In our moment of triumph?" shocked expression on his kisser and a nifty-keen imperial Torture Droid accessory.

10) M-113 Salt Vampire (Classic Star Trek)
With authentic ugly-as-a-monkey's-ass face and interchangeable Kirk, Spock and McCoy heads.

PICKS

WIZARD's list of must-read comic books coming out in May

GREEN LANTERN #75

Writer: Ron Marz
Artists: Darryl Banks & Romeo Tanghal
Release Date: May 1
Cover Price: $1.75

DC COMICS This issue features a major turning point for many cast members. "It's a big-deal space battle, but it's got a lot of key continuity impacts, too," says writer Ron Marz. "It's really the culmination of the storyline we've been working toward since issue #70."

Having learned some lessons from other DC heroes during the "Hero Quest" arc completed in #73, Kyle Rayner now must fight Grayven, Darkseid's illegitimate son, with the entire planet Rann hanging in the balance. Grayven wants to seize control of Rann's Zeta Beam so that he can beam his troops to Apokolips and overthrow his father. Standing in his way are the Darkstars, Adam Strange and GL.

Ultimately, Kyle must save the orbiting city of Ranagar from complete destruction—or perhaps follow in the path of Hal Jordan, who suffered a personality transplant when he couldn't save his own beloved Coast City from oblivion. The issue also results in major consequences for the Darkstars and Donna Troy, Marz promises, and it features John Stewart's final battle.

Grayven's obsession with his poppa leaves Kyle wondering about his own father, who abandoned him as a child. So in issue #76, which ships May 22, GL asks the new Green Arrow to help him track down his dad. That kicks off a new four-issue, two-title arc that continues in *Green Arrow* #110, shipping the same week.

GL #76 features a special homage cover to the famous *GL* (first series) #76 that began the 1970s GL/GA team-ups. The story takes our emerald heroes back to Desolation, the town visited by the Silver Age duo, to see what it's become during the intervening time. "It's an emotional story arc for Kyle," Marz notes. "There are a lot of resonances to the older series and its approach."

If you like *Green Lantern*, *Wizard* recommends you read... *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*, *Robin* and *Flash*, which also feature everyman heroes with real-life problems.

AVENGERS #400

Writer: Mark Waid
Artists: Mike Wieringo & Tom Palmer
Release Date: May 29
Cover Price: $2.50

MARVEL "If you haven't read *Avengers* in 15 years, this is the one to read," says writer Mark Waid, showing a melodramatic flair that Stan Lee would love. "And it'll remind you of why you used to read the book." The reason? Villains, lots of villains—plus a tip of the hat to the Avengers' place in Marvel's heritage for this 48-page extravaganza!

Called "History Repeats Itself," the story opens with a time traveler returning to 1996 to watch the Avengers play out what he calls "the moment of the Avengers' greatest battle—and their last one," Waid explains. With that reverberating through their minds, the Avengers head off to battle an incredible outbreak of villainy. Virtually every bad guy they've ever faced seems to be reappearing across the city.

"There are wall-to-wall villains," says Waid. "This one has them all, True Believer." And he means it, too. The Growing Man and the Kree Sentry take on Giant-Man in a literal battle of the titans, the Kree and Skrulls shoot it out in Times Square, the Lava Men menace Central Park, and there are plenty more: the Squadron Sinister, the Grim Reaper, the Melter, Radioactive Man, and the Living Laser. Even the Scarlet Centurion returns, except he seems to be morphing into Kang and then Rama Tut.

Say what? Kang morphs into Rama Tut? You just know somebody really evil lurks behind all this craziness. The Avengers not only have to beat all these baddies, but they also have to get to the bottom of things—if they can.

More fun comes from Mike Wieringo, who provides breakdowns for Tom Palmer's finishes. "'Ringo loves the Avengers, and that shows in the artwork," Waid says, looking at some pages even as he says it. "He's pulling out his back issues to find villains he can throw in." It also means a cameo in some form for every Avenger who ever passed through the Mansion—and that includes a hefty bunch of heroes by now.

Oh, and did we mention the issue includes an epilogue that helps kick off "Onslaught," the summer mega-crossover that will result in Rob Liefeld rebooting the team in September? Waid will be writing through issue #402 and seeing these guys out the door.

■ Big Picks written by Craig Shutt

If you like *Avengers*, *Wizard* recommends you read... *Captain America* (also written by Waid), along with some old *Avengers* issues like issues #237 to #268, which show great team action. (Incidentally, Waid says his inspiration for *Avengers* #400 came from Reed Richards and Sue Storm's villain-packed wedding in *Fantastic Four Annual* #3.)

MORE PICKS

AQUAMAN #22

DC COMICS Y'know, except for E.T. and the Ewoks, most aliens are ruthless bastard killing machines. And this issue proves it! Some alien scumbags have invaded the undersea city of Basilia and are having their way with the city's folks. Now Aquaman and his fellow Atlanteans must emancipate (Look it up!) Basilia's citizens, but they're really outnumbered. By Peter David, Marty Egeland and Howard Shum. **$1.75**

BATMAN #532

DC COMICS "The Deadman Connection," Part 3 (of 3). Is it us or does Kelley Jones' rendition of Deadman gross you out? It's cool and the look helps give him a unique identity in a sea of superheroes, but...ick. Anyway, he and Batman are helping an ancient city raise its dead to stop a vicious oppressor. By Doug Moench, Kelley Jones and John Beatty. **$2.50 (ENHANCED COVER), $1.95 (REGULAR EDITION)**

THE BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #8

DC COMICS It's a regular catfight of sorts as Harley Quinn gets a bit jealous at her sometime-partner Poison Ivy. It seems Ms. Ivy has got a new partner of her own, namely...Robin! (Hey, Robin, show her why the kids in the locker room dubbed you the Boy Wonder.) By Paul Dini, Ty Templeton and Rick Burchett. **$1.75**

THE BATMAN CHRONICLES #5

DC COMICS This issue of the anthology series holds an untold tale of what led the crippled Batgirl to become Oracle, cyberspace's #1 operator. You'll also learn how a li'l Bruce Wayne, while still livin' with his momma and poppa, got so chummy with Alfred, and read a nifty early Jim Gordon story where the good-hearted cop questions whether he's good enough for Gotham City. By John Ostrander, Alan Grant, Howard Chaykin and a bunch o' other fine folks. **$2.95**

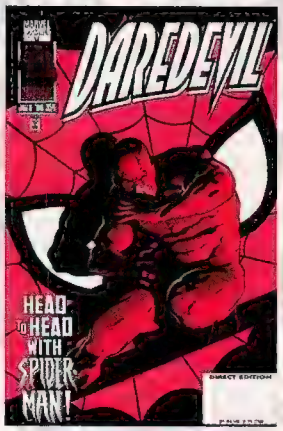
BATMAN: BLACK AND WHITE #2 (OF 4)

DC COMICS Now here's a really cool concept! Batman's this dark and mysterious type o' guy, right? Well, why not tell stories about him in a classic black-and-white style? That's just what this unique mini-series is all about. And this issue features some great stuff by Neil Gaiman, Simon Bisley, Chuck Dixon, Walter Simonson, Kent Williams and others. Plus, check out the funky cover by the master of black-and-white, Frank Miller. **$2.95**

BATMAN #532

THE BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #8

THE BATMAN CHRONICLES #5



DAREDEVIL #354

CAPTAIN AMERICA #453

MARVEL "Man Without a Country," Part 4 (of 4). It's the shield-slingin', chain mail-wearin' conclusion to the roughest Captain America story ever! The President of the U.S. of A. is mere moments from being assassinated and Cap's been exiled to another country. (That's the government for ya!) The only person who can help now is...Doctor Doom? Oh boy, hide the china. By Mark Waid, Ron Garney and Scott Koblish. **$1.50**

CONCRETE: THINK LIKE A MOUNTAIN #3 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE That Concrete. He's so wacky. First, he gets suckered into helping the environmental group Earth First! demonstrate in Canada. Now it seems they've caused some extensive property damage and some loggers are really ticked off. So Concrete, not wanting to be seen or connected to the Earth First! folks, jumps into the Puget Sound (note: we don't know what it is, either), and now he's gotta figure a way outta there and back to America without being noticed! Sounds easy to us! By Paul Chadwick. **$2.95**

DAREDEVIL #354

MARVEL Things are looking up for Marvel books! First, it seems Peter Parker will soon finally return to being the REAL Spider-Man, and now Daredevil's back in his red duds, he's Matt Murdock again and his stories are...fun! Sounds great! And speaking o' Spidey, the wall-crawler guest-stars this issue as that Murdock fella's lookin...uh, feeling around for Mr. Hyde. By Karl Kesel, Cary Nord and Matt Ryan. **$1.50**

DETECTIVE COMICS #698-#699

DC COMICS You get two—that's two—funky issues o' *Detective* this month! It's the last two parts of "Locked Down," as Robin finds himself jailed alongside Two-Face and Charaxes, courtesy of Lock-Up, some newfangled vigilante who thinks he's better'n the cops! But Batman's kinda busy with some mobsters, so it's up to Nightwing and

MORE PICKS

his crappy new costume to save the day. By Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan and Scott Hanna. **$1.95 EACH**

THE DREAMING #2

VERTIGO/DC "The Goldie Factor," Part 2 (of 3). "Gollllldieee! Oh, Gollllldieeee! Where are ya, girl?" Hmm…seems like Cain, Abel and Gregory just can't seem to find their cute li'l gargoyle friend Goldie, who disappeared last ish with some mysterious being. But when the group reaches the ruins of an ancient city, they discover that they're heading back to the beginning of everything! This suggested-for-mature-readers book is brought to ya by Terry LaBan and Peter Snejbjerg. **$2.50**

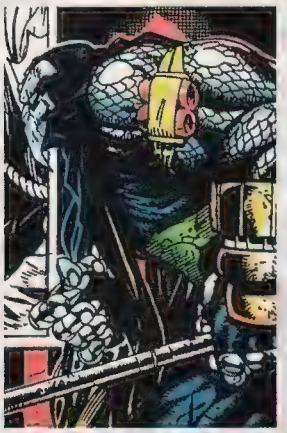
THE FLASH #115

DC COMICS Ow. Time travel hurts. Brace yourselves—this one's a real doozy. Our buddy Wally, who's lost in the time stream, ends up in the 27th Century, where he bumps into John Fox. But (this is a big but) Fox hasn't gone back to the 20th century yet. What happens between the two of them helps explain a bit just why (in "our" time) Fox is more concerned with puttin' the moves on Linda than with taking down Chillblaine. Didja get all that? By Mark Waid, Oscar Jimenez, Jim Cheung, José Marzan Jr. and Hanibal Rodriguez. (Whew.) Waid says, "On his struggle back to the 20th Century, Flash stumbles into the 27th century and meets John Fox for the first time. So it actually is a story that takes place in John's time before John comes back [to the 20th century] in issue #112. It sets the stage for why he comes back. And we see what happens to John between the first and last time we saw him, which was in the *Flash 50th Anniversary Special.* This is a story that takes place shortly thereafter and kind of explains what happened to his career in the 27th century." **$1.75**

GENERATION X #17

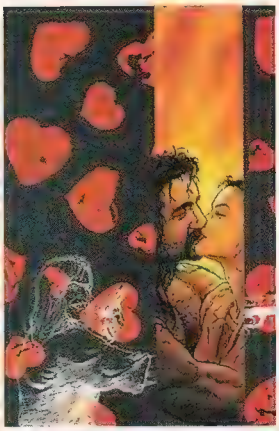
MARVEL Hey, welcome back, Chris! (That's Chris Bachalo, the penciler guy who was busy the last few months doing a gorgeous job on the new *Death* mini-series for Vertigo.) Anyways, that bad-ass the X-Cutioner shows up as well, and no one but Skin is around to stop him. Plus, there's a real neat framing sequence starring Stan "The Man" Lee himself! By Scott Lobdell, Chris Bachalo and Mark Buckingham. **$1.95**

GHOST/HELLBOY SPECIAL #1 (OF 2)



GENERATION X #17

GHOST/HELLBOY SPECIAL #1



GRENDEL TALES: THE DEVIL MAY CARE #6

THE INCREDIBLE HULK #443

DARK HORSE It's the perfect match-up. Hellboy, a guy under the employment of the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense, and Ghost, a woman who was murdered and is now "walking" the streets in search of her killers. When the Bureau hears of a ghost causin' problems in Arcadia, they send Hellboy in to bring her back dead or…well, dead. Fun-filled adventure by Mike Mignola, Scott Benefiel and Jasen Rodriguez. Mignola says, "It was difficult for me, because I've never had to write characters that I didn't create. So it's not so much a Ghost story as it is a Hellboy story. She's pretty much in it just as somebody for Hellboy to pick on. She's the dupe of the story. Though Ghost does get to kick the crap out of Hellboy." **$2.50**

GREEN ARROW #110

DC COMICS "Hard-Travelling Heroes: The Next Generation," Part 2 (of 4). This baby picks up right where *Green Lantern* #76 leaves off. Green Lantern and Green Arrow continue their search for Kyle's dad, but when they hit the town of Desolation they discover that all of its inhabitants have gotten rich off of suing corporations. After some heavy digging, the Green Duo finds out who's behind the whole thing: a crooked judge, the meta-human Hatchet and…dum dum DUM…Kyle's pappy! By Chuck Dixon, Rodolfo Damaggio and Robert Camapanella. That swell guy Dixon says, "It's interesting, because the original GL/GA team-up was done from one political standpoint, and this one is done by people who don't agree with each other. So you're gonna get every viewpoint in the story. Now that it's all said and done, I think it's a real cohesive story, because we pull it from one direction to the other. As for future issues, Green Arrow gets his first recurring love interest, but he can only see her at certain times of the year. It's kind of a supernatural thing. That's #112 and #113. And right after that, he'll be running into Shado." **$2.25**

GRENDEL TALES: THE DEVIL MAY CARE #6 (OF 6)

DARK HORSE It's showdown time! Hack's gotta decide between stopping Albert (Dana's son) or giving up control of the Klan. Not a tough decision, till you realize Hack's in love with Dana! Oh, cruel love, why do you tempt us so? Plus, Dana's relationship with Hack is causing all sorts of problems between her and her son. It's *Romeo & Juliet* with guns and motorcycles! This awesome adventure, which is strongly suggested for you

MORE PICKS

mature types, is by Terry LaBan and Peter Doherty. **$2.95**

IMPULSE #15

DC COMICS The li'l Bartster's gotta find the "Eye of God," an ancient artifact that was stolen by some punks. Oh yeah, it also happens to be some big power source or somethin'. Anywho, the Trickster and White Lightning are the main suspects! A fast and furious tale by Mark Waid, Anthony Williams and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

THE INCREDIBLE HULK #443

MARVEL How many times are they gonna blow up the Hulk? Sheesh. Well, remember Rick Jones' granddaughter Janis, from the pages of *Future Imperfect*? No? Well, anyway, Janis has come from the future to our time to track down the Hulk, who got blown up real good in issue #440. By Peter David, Angel Medina and Robin Riggs. **$1.50**

KANE #14

DANCING ELEPHANT PRESS Heh, that title always cracks me up. (The publisher, not the comic.) This issue spotlights Kate Felix and her first day at ye ole precinct. There's plenty o' scumbags on hand when she bumps into pickpockets, muggers, con artists and an escaped prisoner. Thing is, Kate's only 4 years old! (Doogie Howser, look out!) By Paul Grist. **$3.50**

KINGDOM COME #1 (OF 4)

DC COMICS Wahoo! It's finally here. This incredible project took Alex Ross something like 86 years to complete, and it certainly shows! This Elseworlds tale takes place in an apocalyptic future where Superman's retired, heroes ain't so much heroes anymore, and Batman...well, Batman's causing trouble as usual. (Check out the *Kingdom Come* feature on page 44 for the full skinny!) Outstanding work from Mark Waid and Alex Ross. **$4.95**

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #82

DC COMICS Road trip! The Legion heads off to Xanthu, Star Boy's homeworld, but things get real wacky when a bunch of rogue heroes starts attacking the team. And if that's not enough for ya, Live Wire's gotta make a real tough choice about his injured arm. (Hey, he and Aquaman can go halfsies on a set of harpoon arms! They'll save a fortune.) By Tom Peyer, Tom McCraw, Lee Moder, Michael Collins and Ron Boyd. **$2.25**

KINGDOM COME #1

THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO #2

LEGIONNAIRES #38

DC COMICS You want spills? You want chills? We gots 'em! Not only is a new Legion leader elected (Ten bucks says it's Oozing Scab Lad!), but Saturn Girl looks into her past, hoping to find ways to increase her powers. Plus (Geez, talk about bang for your buck!), it seems recent tensions between Titan and Braal haven't completely subsided. By Roger Stern, Tom McCraw, Jeffrey Moy and W.C. Carani. **$2.25**

THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO: THE VELVET DRAGON #2 (OF 5)

TOPPS That nasty Wong Du King has...waitaminnit, "Wong Du King"? Sounds like some fried stuffed Chinese dish stuffed with questionable "meat." Anyway, Mr. Du King kidnapped the martial arts master Wu Chan and is torturing the poor guy to find out where a certain mystical artifact is. Can the Lone Ranger and Tonto get to their mentor in time? By Joe R. Lansdale and Ted Naifeh. **$2.95**

THE MAXX #24

IMAGE Things heat up as Sara and Norbert (Norbert? The new Maxx's name is Norbert?) try to put the kibosh on that evil slug known as Lago! To stop him, our friendly duo must go fishin' for

WHAT I'M READING

name: **Andy Kubert**
occupation: **artist of Marvel's *X-Men***
currently reads: "*Captain America* is one I've been picking up. It's well-paced and well-drawn. It's just a lot of fun—a fun read. Mark Waid's doing a really good job with it. He's doing a good job with *X-Men* too, so far. The X-books I pretty much read are mine, *Uncanny* and *Wolverine*. *Generation X*, also. *Sin City* I read and like. I like the stories and the art. I put aside *Preacher* because I hear it's outstanding. I'll have to check it out. I just saw Neil Gaiman and Chris Bachalo's *Death: The Time of Your Life*. That first issue was gorgeous."

Photo by J. Schuyler

MORE PICKS

exploding fairies (insert your own non-PC joke here). By Sam Kieth and William Messner-Loebs. **$1.95**

THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #16

DC COMICS Mr. Mind's back! Didja ever play that cool game where Mr. Mind's mouth opens and closes and you gotta flick these little colored discs in? What? That's "Mr. *Mouth*"? Oh. Well, Mr. Mind is back, and Captain Marvel couldn't be any less happier! The Big Red Cheese is stuck on Venus, where he's overpowered by Mr. Mind and his army o' worms. Ewww. By Jerry Ordway, Peter Krause and Mike Manley. Ordway says, "The series is really gearing up. The fans are starting to come around to it. We're well into our second year, and we're still here, which is good. [*Laughs*] With the same creative team, which is also really good. Everybody's doing great stuff. Gil Kane will be doing another issue, #19—another Captain Marvel Jr. solo story. Plastic Man shows up in issue #20. It's fun dealing with a character like that." **$1.75**

PREACHER #15

VERTIGO/DC "Hunters," Part 3 (of 4). Starr's pretty ticked off after his recent encounter in an alley. Plus, Jesse and his pals crash Jesus' party and witness some real shocking events. And considering what's gone on during the past 14 issues, that's gotta be some incredible crap! (I still feel bad for that armadillo.) Great stuff by Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. Yep, you guessed it, this one's for you mature ones. **$2.50**

ROBIN #31

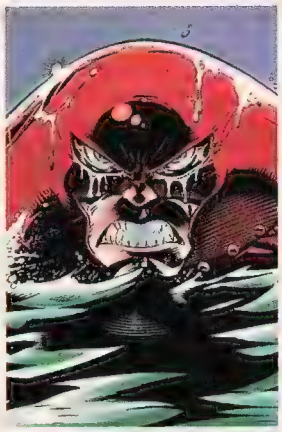
DC COMICS Looks like Robin's feelin' a little bit better after that whole "Contagion" thing (which, by the way, was one of—if not *the*—best crossover stories we've ever read! Go back and read it if you passed it up.), 'cause in this issue he's out on the town with that Golden Age wonder, Wildcat! The two are on the hunt for Robin's old sparring partners, the Speed Boyz! By Chuck Dixon, Mike Wieringo and Stan Woch. **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #40

VERTIGO/DC "The Mist," Part 4 (of 4). Oy vey! Following a few attempted bombings at a rabbi's house, the Sandman beefs up security

THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #16

PREACHER #15



UNCANNY X-MEN #334

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #11

for the "rebbi" and tries to shield him from a New York party of Nazis and the Jewish Mafia! Plus, besides giving the Sandman a hand, Ted Knight (Starman) puts the moves on Dian! Ooh...there's gonna be troubllllle! By Matt Wagner, Steven Seagle and Guy Davis. This fine title is recommended for ye o' the mature rank. **$2.25**

SIN CITY: THAT YELLOW BASTARD #4 (OF 6)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Hartigan's finally a free man after serving his time for crimes he didn't commit. But now he's gotta find out why that little girl's letters stopped coming just a few months before his release. Looks like Hartigan's on the case again! By Frank Miller. This puppy's suggested for you mature readers out there. **$2.95**

STARMAN #20

DC COMICS "Sand and Stars," Part 1 (of 4). Hey, this book (which takes place now) continues events from recent issues of *Sandman Mystery Theatre* (which takes place decades ago). Neat! While searching for the Mist's medal, Starman leaves Opal City and heads to New York City, where he's gotta find the Golden Age Sandman, Wesley Dodds. By James Robinson, Tony Harris and Wade Von Grawbadger. **$2.25**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #12

ABSTRACT STUDIOS Uh oh. Katchoo's got a new girlfriend, and you just will not believe who it is! (So I won't even bother telling ya.) Francine gets real jealous, becomes a wreck, and heads for Hawaii to follow Freddie (who left to go marry another woman). Confused? Well, not as much as poor David is, who's now thinking he might've been wrong about Katchoo! By Terry Moore, who also happens to be writing the new *Lady Supreme* series from Extreme Studios, also beginning this month. **$2.75**

STRAY BULLETS #9

EL CAPITÁN All you Nick fans out there (Remember that flick "The Sure Thing" with John Cusack? "Nick's your pal, Nick's your buddy. Eugene? Eugene's a fat kid in glasses who eats paste.") are gonna wanna pick up this issue, starring 26 guys named Nick. You'll find out

MORE PICKS

all sorts of juicy stuff, like whether each one's a good guy or bad, how he treats animals, whether he's an alcoholic or not, and lots more! Sounds keen! By David Lapham. **$2.95**

SUPERBOY #29

DC COMICS "Losin' It!" Part 5 (of 6). Hey, looks like Superboy doesn't have to worry about being a fugitive from the law anymore. That's great! Oh, wait. It's not great. The reason is that Victor Volcanum has set off an eruption of lava right off the coast o' Hawaii. Yep, there's lots and lots of property damage, as well as a major change in Superboy's life! Fun and adventure by Karl Kesel, Steve Mattson, Staz Johnson and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.95**

UNCANNY X-MEN #334

MARVEL It's plenty o' Onslaught fun! Juggernaut seeks out Jean Grey's help to discover everything he can about Onslaught's identity. (In case ya missed it, Onslaught creamed Juggy all the way from Canada to Hoboken back in *Uncanny* #322.) By Scott Lobdell, Joe Madureira and Tim Townsend. **$1.95**

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #11

MARVEL *Untold*'s easily the best Spidey book (and possibly best Marvel book) on the market right now. It's typical Parker luck when Flash Thompson wants to be his best friend and some new heroine called Bluebird wants to be Spidey's partner! Oh yeah, and Electro and the Eel form a new partnership. Sounds like Spidey's got his hands full this ish. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Al Vey. **99 CENTS**

WILDC.A.T.S #30

IMAGE The C.A.T.s take on some Gamorran cybernetic forces, and when they eventually get to Kaizen himself, they face a shocking revelation. The absolute truth of what really happened to John Colt and how Spartan was created finally comes to light this issue! By Alan Moore and Travis Charest. **$2.50**

X-MEN #54

MARVEL Y'know, if you squint a little bit, Onslaught looks a lot like those giant crab/beetle critters from "The Dark Crystal." Anyway, this

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #11

X-MEN #54

AT A GLANCE!

A listing of the high-profile books shipping in May

Action Comics #723 (DC Comics) It's part 2 of the "Brainiac-booted-Superman's-consciousness-and-has-taken-control-of-his-body" story! **$1.95**

Adventures of Superman #535(DC Comics) Part 1 of this cool mind-swappin' story sees Supes' mind in a scrawny teenager's body while Brainiac's is in Supes'. **$1.95**

Amazing Spider-Man #413 (Marvel) Is Mysterio behind all the toys that are causing trouble for our itsy bitsy Spidey? **$1.50**

Ash: The Fire Within #1 (Event Comics) Now that Ash knows the secrets behind his powers, he begins testing them out. **$2.95**

Atomik Angels #1 (Crusade) A religious fanatic threatens to destroy Manhattan, and the Angels (a government-sponsored, radiation-resistant team) are New York's only hope. **$2.95**

Cable #33 (Marvel) Cable takes on Onslaught's herald, Post, but what's Cable's connection to them both? **$1.95**

Fire From Heaven #2 (Image) All the heroes head to the moon for an all-out battle with Damocles and his followers. **$2.50**

Gen^{13} #11 (Image) The kids battle Ivana and her Deviants, and Alex Fairchild might be the Gensters' only hope. **$2.50**

Lady Death: The Odyssey #3 (Chaos! Comics) Lady Death encounters Kali, the Goddess of Chaos and Order, in the mystical realm of the Hindu Gods. **$2.95**

Sensational Spider-Man #6 (Marvel) Jessica Carradine knows that Ben's really Spider-Man. But what's she gonna do with that info? **$1.95**

Shi: The Way of the Warrior #9 (Crusade) The survivor of the Shi vs. Tomoe battle is running around on a rampage through Arashiyama. **$2.95**

Spawn #50 (Image) For saving someone's life, Spawn is sent to Hell. **$3.95**

Spectacular Spider-Man #236 (Marvel) Will O' The Wisp and Dragon Man cause some serious problems for Spidey! **$1.50**

Spider-Man #70 (Marvel) Web-Head takes on a new crimelord who's launching a massive rise to power in New York. **$1.95**

Superman #113 (DC Comics) Supes finds himself in the middle of a huge dispute between Lex and the Contessa. **$1.95**

Superman: The Man of Steel #58 (DC Comics) Trapped in a teen's body, Supes escapes from a mental ward and is hunted for a murder he didn't commit, in part 3 of the big Brainiac story. **$1.95**

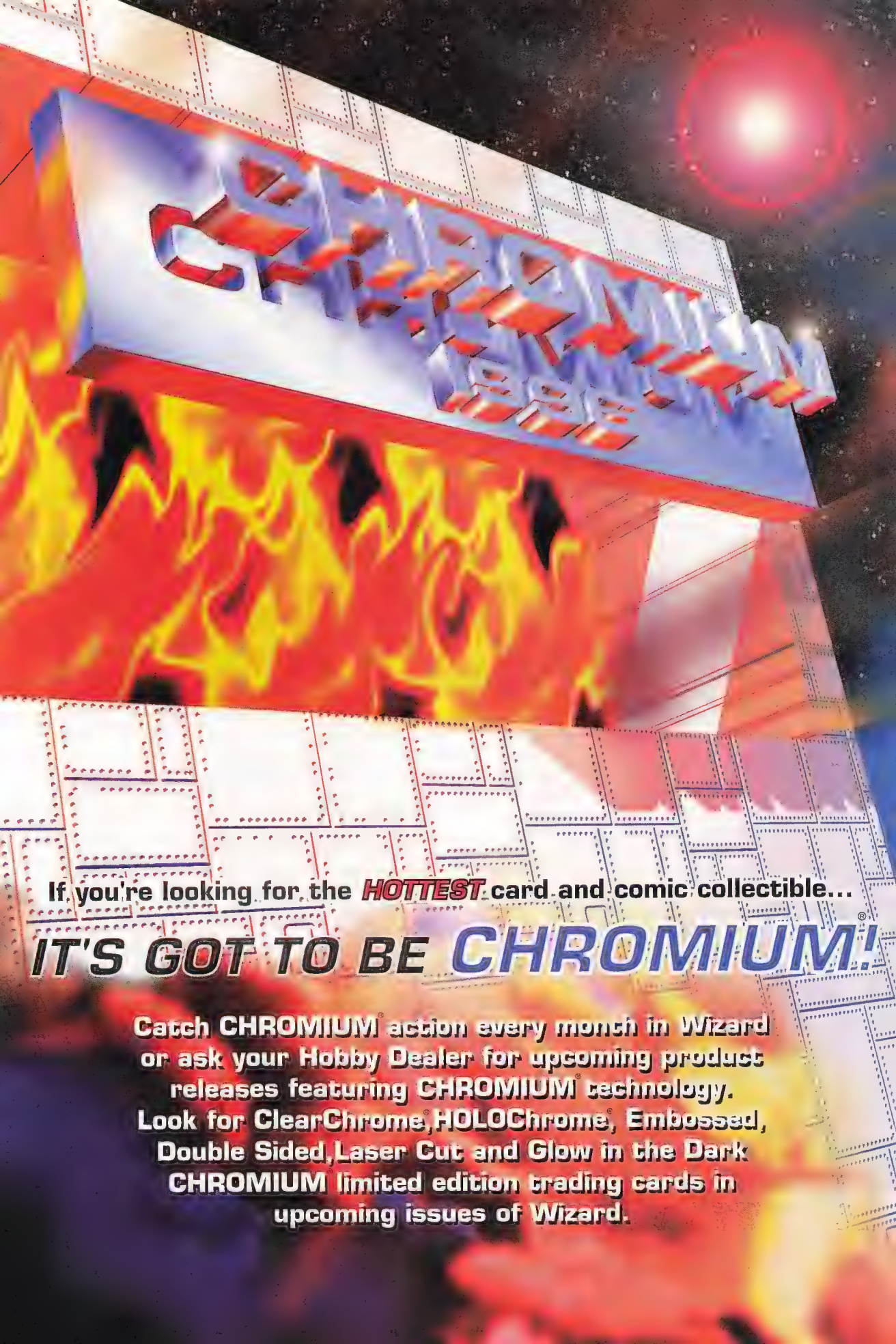
Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #5 (DC Comics) Jimmy crashes Lex and the Contessa's wedding, causing a ton o' problems for Metropolis. **$1.95**

Wolverine #103 (Marvel) Wolvie and Elektra go at it! We think. **$1.95**

X-Factor #124 (Marvel) A new covert agency is turning the team into a bunch of mutant-hunting hounds! **$1.95**

The X-Files #18 (Topps) Mulder gets confused when there seem to be two Scullys walking around. (Also check out *The X-Files #0* for an adaptation of the TV pilot episode. **$2.95**

X-Man #17 (Marvel) Nate takes on Onslaught's emissary, that rat-bastard Holocaust! **$1.95**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scene

A guide to Japanese comics and animation

by Carl Gustav Horn

it's prime time for anime

Anime hasn't been big on U.S. televisions since such toy-based shows as "Robotech."

Anime is known by and large as a video phenomenon in the United States and, despite fears of an upcoming glut of titles on the market, it's been a very successful one. But compared to Japan, where dozens of anime shows on TV command audiences in the millions and anime films in theaters beat out even the American blockbusters, video is small potatoes—a reality that has kept many Japanese studios from regarding the American market as anything more than a sideline. So how does anime get not only into U.S. video stores, but into the mass media of television and movies as well?

It can certainly be argued that the most ambitious attempt since "Akira" to shoehorn anime into U.S. theaters is Manga Entertainment's "Ghost in the Shell." Unlike almost all U.S. releases of anime, where the primary expense is licensing an already-made TV show, OAV (Original Animation Video) or movie, "Ghost" was co-financed by Manga, whose share is rumored to have been as much as two million dollars—10 times larger than what's currently considered "expensive" for merely licensing an anime. Marvin Gleicher, Manga's president, talked to more than one major distributor concerning "Ghost," but even those who liked what they saw in the film seemed afraid of something—an upstart like "Ghost" screwing up their own major-studio releases...or even the shadow of mouse ears. Gleicher isn't joking when he says, "I assume that some of them were 'spying' for Disney to see what the state of the art in animation is. We're breaking new ground here, and I'm proud of it, even if "Ghost" goes beyond some people's established ideas of what an animated film should be in this country." Manga ended up making direct arrangements with both independent theaters and chain branches, so far gleaning "Ghost" over forty bookings in the space of a few months.

"Ghost int Shell" is currently touring the U.S. in hopes of bringing anime to the media forefront.

Tara Releasing, in San Rafael, Calif., has handled six Oscar-winning documentaries, but the company's also known as the leading theatrical distributor of anime in the United States, having worked with Manga, the now-defunct L.A. Hero, Central Park Media and, most recently, Streamline Pictures. "For now, anime is strictly marginal and more marginal than, say, Hong Kong films, whose space they often share in art theaters," says Tara's Public Relations Director Rama Wiener. "What anime needs is someone like Quentin Tarantino, who promoted Hong Kong films endlessly through Miramax, just because he thinks they're so cool. Now you see Jackie Chan and John Woo's films on a thousand screens at once, while at present a given anime film is lucky to be on *five* at once nationwide. Of course, a 'Hong Kong' film to most Americans means action, but when we're speaking of anime, it's a broad range of styles—not as easy to push, perhaps."

When "Sailor Moon," a smash hit in Japan, hit U.S. televisions this fall at the same time as the similarly successful "Dragon Ball," and the lesser-known "Ronin Warriors" (called "Samurai Troopers" in Japan) and "Teknoman" (originally "Tekkaman Blade"), some optimistically predicted a new presence for anime on the small screen of a sort unseen since such toy-based mid-'80s shows as *Voltron*, *Transformers* and the iconoclastic *Robotech*. Mike Goldman, an associate editor at *Variety*, however, points out that while "Sailor Moon" 's original concept—female protagonists in an anime show—has helped it hang in there and sell a good amount of merchandise, its ratings have been only so-so. They aren't even approaching the live-action "Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers" 's success which prompted Japanese megacorp Bandai (which owns both shows) to give "Sailor Moon" a whirl in the U.S. in the first place.

Goldman certainly doesn't see anime as the wave of the future on American television, dis-

placing live-action shows. But that's not the case in Japan either, where anime makes up only about 22 hours out of each week's programming. Goldman does note the possibilities: "Many anime shows aren't appropriate for younger American viewers, either because of their storytelling style or visual content. [U.S. versions of "Sailor Moon" and "Dragon Ball" use computer-assisted "clothing" of nudity that is unobjectionable for a Japanese children's show.] But I believe there is a huge market for animation for the older kids, teenagers and adults, and cable may be the way to go. There's no doubt that MTV's "Aeon Flux" takes influence from anime, and I know that other American animators feel the same influence." As for actual anime shows, Goldman remarks that a cable foothold has already been established with MTV's "Speed Racer" and numerous anime clips in videos and promos, as well as on the Sci-Fi Channel. "The only limitation then, may be the late-night scheduling necessary for adult-oriented anime on cable—that means a ceiling on potential audience percentage."

Goldman concludes with an interesting remark about anime's prospects on the movie screen. "The people in the animation industry who I've talked to, who wish to compete with Disney, are beginning to realize that the way to do it is not to fight them on their own turf—children's stories and fairy tales—but in the action/adventure genre. I know that some of the people at Marvel would love to try and do it." Could the master director of live-action, action/adventure, James Cameron, who has endorsed "Ghost in the Shell" in its advertising campaign and wants to work with its director, do for anime here what Tarantino did for Hong Kong films? Japanese animation may be ready to take its first real swing and carve out a place for itself in the American film market. Initial returns from "Ghost" 's biggest city yet, Boston, have been good, but only time will tell if anime is indeed ready for prime time.

"Ghost in the Shell" is currently appearing in theaters across the country for a limited time. For more information or to check when it's heading to a theater near you check out Manga Entertainment's website at http://www.manga.com/manga or e-mail them at manga@manga.com. W

Carl Gustav Horn prefers his manga with a slice of lemon, a pinch of salt and a slab o' butter.

"Speed Racer" is currently racing across your television, thanks to MTV.

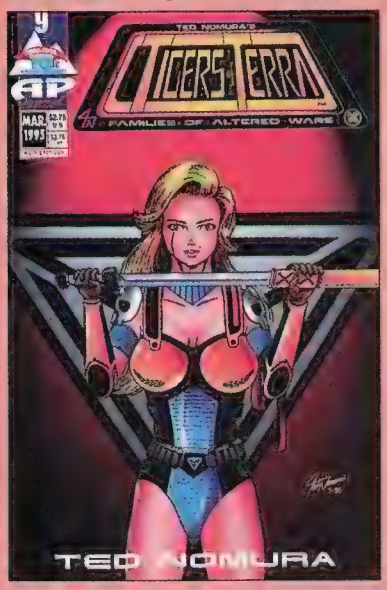
picks of the month

manga

Tigers of Terra: Families of Altered Wars

(Antarctic Press, $2.75, monthly, 32 pages, b&w)

Ted Nomura's *Tigers of Terra* began as an independent, small press comic nearly 10 years ago, making it, together with Antarctic's *Ninja High School* (which took over its publication in 1993), the oldest continually published "American Manga" in the U.S. *Tigers*' workman-like art style takes inspiration from the war comics of Leiji Matsumoto on one hand and Joe Kubert on the other. Those jumping into it now after nearly 1,400 pages may feel like they're in the same position as new *Cerebus* fans, but the basic plot idea (like *Cerebus*, much is still hidden) switches between nine generations of a multi-national family from 1895 to 2045. They're all children and grandchildren of a woman never fated to be born, whose descendants in consequence end up altering historical wars for good or ill. Those who like "What if?" stories will enjoy *Tigers*, with its meticulously researched retro-weapons drawn by Air Force veteran Nomura. Also, look for a four-part, color *Tigers* mini-series, *Luftwaffe 1946*, beginning in June.



anime

The Dagger of Kamui

(AnimEigo, subtitled, 132 mins., $39.95)

"Kamui" is a historical fantasy adventure (so the hero can do neat stuff like bump into Mark Twain or search for Captain Kidd's treasure), which should please anyone who's attracted to the romance of the ninja and the Japanese countryside. Kamui's quest for revenge and booty is set against the end of the samurai era. In this 1985 film, Director Rin Taro manages to do for the sulfur springs, autumn woodlands and snow-strewn fields of Japan's past, what Katsuhiro Otomo would do three years later for the cityscape of Japan's future in "Akira." But instead of high-tech bikes and laser cannons, we get back to the deadly elemental grace of hands, feet, wood and iron. "Kamui" is also available on laserdisc, and AnimEigo has recently lowered prices on many of its videos, so look to get *Kamui* at a discount. At $39.95, though, this epic-length adventure certainly gives you your money's worth.

VERTIGO

A Dream of a Contest!

Yeah, we're all moping around the office, all depressed that *The Sandman* has finally gone off to that great comic longbox in the sky. But just as one "Gaimanverse" title ends, more begin. The future is looking pretty bright. A new Death mini-series, *The Time of Your Life*, is on the stands. *The Dreaming*, a new ongoing series featuring Sandman's rich supporting cast, is starting any second now. And of course, there's that new Neil Gaiman-Charles Vess series on the horizon.

Heck, all these new goodies make it seem more like a party occasion. So we'll throw a trivia party to test your "Gaimanverse" knowledge. Get these questions right and you could win one heck of a door prize.

How Do I Play?

Just answer these five Gaiman-related trivia questions, and you could win a world of neat stuff. Randomly selected winners who get all five questions right will take home the swag. Here're your q's:

1. What was Matthew the Raven's first and last name when he was human?
2. Name Morpheus' immortal friend whom he meets with once every 100 years.
3. What song did Foxglove sing on "The David Letterman Show" in *Death: The Time of Your Life #1*?
4. What diminutive denizen of the Dreaming is the subject of the first story arc in *The Dreaming*?
5. What's the title of the upcoming Neil Gaiman-Charles Vess series?

One Heck of a Door Prize (1):

One lucky Gaimanphile who does his homework and gets all the answers right will receive the biggest, ginchiest Gaiman-and-crew prize package that we could put together—an original Sandman statue (from a Kelley Jones design and part of a limited edition of 1,800 pieces), the Sandman Arabian Nights statue (P. Craig Russell design), the Death statue (Chris Bachalo design), a Death watch, a Sandman T-shirt, two different Death T-shirts, a set of Death VERTIGO temporary tattoos (Non-toxic! We swear!) and a set of four posters: "Brief Lives" (by Jill Thompson), "The Wake" (by Michael Zulli) and "Death I" and "Death II" by Chris Bachalo. Oh, yeah—just to keep things current, we'll throw in a copy of *Death: The Time of Your Life #1* autographed by Chris Bachalo and *The Dreaming #1* autographed by Terry LaBan. Whew!

Second Prize (3):

Three other fortuitous readers will receive a package consisting of three posters, a Death T, a Sandman T, those swell temporary tattoos and the autographed copies of *Death: The Time of Your Life* and *The Dreaming*.

This contest is sponsored by VERTIGO/DC Comics and DC Retail Products, and we think they're real swell.

Fill this sucker out, put it in an envelope and send it to:
A Dream of a Contest
c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118
Deadline is June 28, 1996—so stop daydreaming and hustle!

The Legaling

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics and their immediate families or anyone who's currently asleep. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach your answers. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: A Dream of a Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Um, excuse me. Mr. Sandman? If you bring me a dream, please make her the cutest that I've ever seen. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 28, 1996.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on July 15, 1996.

For a list of winners, available after July 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: A Dream of a Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Gaimanverse Entry Form!

DEADLINE IS JUNE 28, 1996!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

(Print answers down here) 1. _____

2. _____ 3. _____

4. _____ 5. _____

DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The four folks whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive a *Chaos! Quarterly* #2 signed by Boris Vallejo and a Fleer X-Men Ultra Print #1 signed by Bob Larkin. Each of the three runners-up scores a *Shi* #1 signed by Billy Tucci, a copy of *The X-Files* #6 signed by Stefan Petrucha and a *Ghost Rider 2099* #1 signed by Len Kaminski. Mr. Grand Prize runs away with all those goodies plus an original art page from *Spectacular Scarlet Spider* #2 by Sal Buscema and Jimmy Palmiotti, generously donated by Palmiotti—thanks very much, Jimmy! Congratulations, y'all!

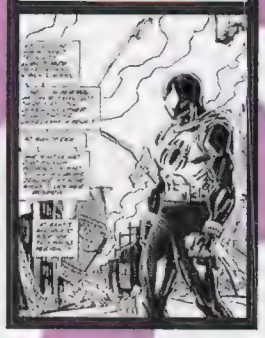
GRAND PRIZE

GALACTUS **Malcolm Zinzan** Tottenham, Ontario, Canada

THE ARTIST

MALCOLM ZINZAN

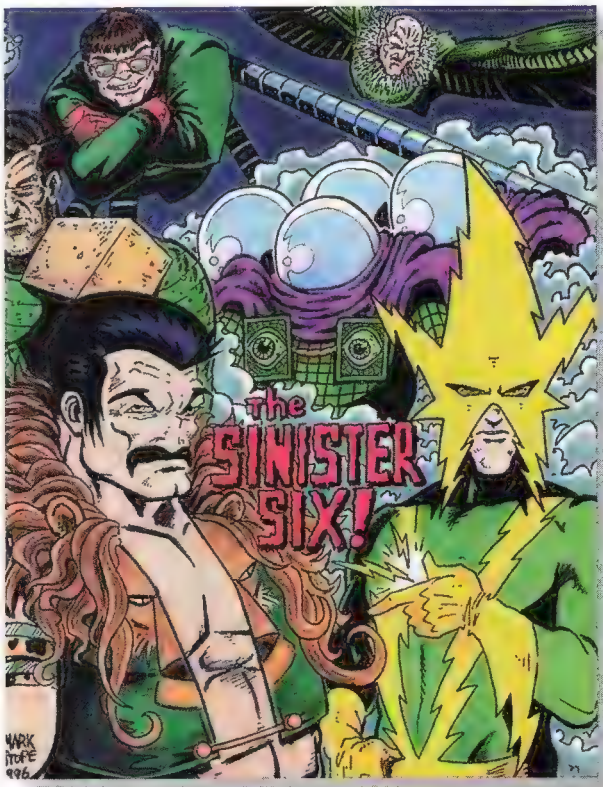
THE BOOTY



RUNNERS-UP

"SAND-CALVIN" Bryan Rearick Venetia, PA

LOBO Leinil Yu Manila, Philippines



THE SINISTER SIX Mark Stope Victoria, B.C., Canada

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"GOMER"
JMG
Washington, D.C.

ASH
William H. Tscharner Jr.
St. Louis, MO

SHI
Zack Counts
Clearwater, FL

VIZ CHARACTERS GET A NEW LOOK
Brad M. Haffey
Unionville, Ont., Canada

Want your art to appear on one of these three pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Entries can be e-mailed to WizardTGTC@aol.com (Please use an EPS or TIFF format @ 300 dpi.). And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. If you do not write your full name, address and telephone number on the back of your entry, it will be disqualified. All entries are nonreturnable and become the property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

BY JOYCE M. STEEL

Only the Galaxy's Finest

The Force is with all of us card collectors this May, thanks to Topps' new all-chromium 90-card series, *Star Wars Finest*. It's the first time the company's "Finest" imprint (usually reserved for sport sets) has adorned an entertainment set. Fans will find 90 new renditions of their favorite characters illustrated by artists like Den Beauvais and Joe Chiodo, and biographies of all those characters written by Andy Mangels, author of *Star Wars: The Essential Guide to Characters*. Chase cards include six embossed-foil Key Character cards painted by Dan Brereton, and four Topps Matrix cards painted by Ray Lago and John Van Fleet (five cards per pack, suggested retail $2.50).

FLEER/SKYBOX

If you're looking for a way to keep those little siblings' mitts off your card collection, Fleer/SkyBox has got the solution this May.

The company's handling the big Disney animated summer release, "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," with a series that includes 58 trading cards and 41 weird interactive collectibles. Among the oddities are "topsy turvy" character cards that can be broken in half and interchanged to form new characters, "build-a-tower" cards that combine to form a mini-Notre Dame bell tower, "finger puppet" cards (and a stage!), pop-out cards, coin cards and puzzle cards. Iron-on transfers (1:6 packs) and lenticular cards (1:24 packs) chase the series. Plus, every pack includes a card that can be used in the Hunchback collectible card game, also due out in May (11 cards per pack, suggested retail $1.49).

In *MarvelVision*, Fleer/SkyBox has tailor-made an embossed 100-card set for fans of Marvel's four animated shows: "Spider-Man," "X-Men," "Iron Man" and "Fantastic Four." The company is even adding bonuses like a mini-magazine on card collecting in each pack, 16 different temporary tattoos (1:3 packs) and an "encryptalizer" (1:6 packs) to decode secret messages on card backs (seven cards per pack, suggested retail $1.49).

MISCELLANEOUS CARDMAKERS

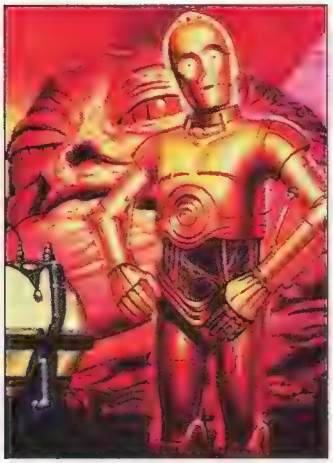
Intrepid's back from the outback and up from down under with another first: *Cyberforce Summer* trading cards. All new art highlights the 90-card set, with tons o' subsets like Hot Shots (15 guest artists, including Simon Bisley, Adam Hughes and Bill Sienkiewicz get a shot at their favorite Cyberforce characters) and Hot Spots (12 triptych cards showcasing the Cyberforce team in the heat of battle in some of the world's most tropical locales). Chasing the regular series are three levels of bonuses: six foil-highlighted Red Hot cards, nine foil Creator Series cards by Silvestri and three Overheat Silvestri acetate foil cards (seven cards per pack, suggested retail $2.95 per pack).

Finally, Graffiti—the company whose formation last year using renegade SkyBox employees was the card industry's answer to the Marvel-to-Image evolution of the early '90s—is now InkWorks. The first series under the new name, debuting May 29th, is a 90-carder based on Paramount's "The Phantom" flick. Most exciting feature: the nine-card, foil-puzzle chase set by Joe Jusko (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.49).

DISH FOR THE NEXT ISH

Just in time for camping season, a set on Smokey the Bear wafts down from Canada's Dart Flipcards. Plus, Comic Images provides Tucci fans with another shot o' Shi, and FPG revisits the successful Burroughs/Jusko combination in a big way! W

Joyce M. Steel, a comics 'n' cards freelancer from New Jersey, owns the largest assortment of Charlie's Angels stickers in the Northeast.



"My word. I do believe Jabba's not wearing any pants!" Topps' *Star Wars Finest*.

"Now if she'd only fall for that 'I'm outta gas' line again..." InkWorks' *The Phantom*.

InQuest presents HIT THE DECK

The latest in collectible card game news

• ***Mirage***. No, it's not just another trick of the heat—*Magic*'s got a new set heading our way this fall. In the tradition of *Ice Age*, *Mirage* will be a stand-alone expansion of over 300 cards, new rule variants and a special series of collectible cards. The locale this time? Dominaria's equator: the tropical world of Jamuraa. Cross your fingers for piranhas and dinosaurs.

• Speaking of cute li'l prehistoric reptiles, ***Dino Hunt***'s a brand-new CCG from Steve Jackson Games where players compete to bring dinosaurs to the present. Look for it to debut at GenCon in August.

• April's two biggest stars should be Wizards of the Coast's cyberpunk CCG ***Netrunner*** and Topps' ***Killer Instinct***, the combat-oriented slugfest based on the ever-popular arcade and video game. *Magic* creator Richard Garfield is the primary designer on *Netrunner*, so bank on another unique and challenging game system. With tons of killer combos and special character moves, look for *Killer Instinct* to be loads of blood-lustin' fun. You know, like that *Rage* game.

• What else is suppose to be out in April? ***Cthulhu Rising***, the second expansion for *Mythos: Call of Cthulhu*, sounds even nastier than the previous set and brings 60 new cards to the mix. ***Drifter's Nexus***, *Guardians*' second expansion, introduces time travel to an already motley universe. Be prepared to battle it out with gunslingers, shamans and other reality-twisted monsters. *¡Adios!* ■ *Michael Searle*

Michael Searle is the editor of Wizard's sister mag InQuest, the all-around grooviest guide to collectible card games.

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are April's hottest back issues.**

TOP 10 COMICS

1. DAWN #1

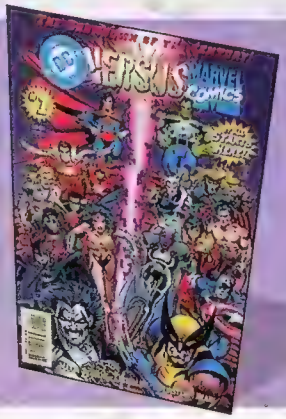
WRITER: Joseph Michael Linsner ARTIST: Joseph Michael Linsner

Just when we thought the whole Bad Girl thing was taking a bit of a dip, the...uh...healthiest women in comics bounce back and prove that with a little determination, two handfuls of silicone and some back support, anything's possible. Heck, *Dawn* zoomed up the ranks like wildfire this month, flying from #9 to #1 (and she's not the only Comeback Queen!). While it's possible that this issue's story of the mysterious Dawn meeting NYC warrior Darrian and his bloody venture into Heaven may have done zilch for the average reader, Linsner's highly detailed, breathtaking art increased the ga-ga factor tenfold. People really love this guy's stuff—that's all there is to it.

2. DC VERSUS MARVEL #1

WRITER: Ron Marz ARTISTS: Dan Jurgens, Josef Rubinstein, Claudio Castellini and Paul Neary

Here's a series that absolutely showed the world what fanboys really are: fanboys. So Marvel and DC do the unthinkable by bringing their universes of heroes together (and not just a namby-pamby, two-hero meeting like that crappy Superman/Spider-Man team-up from way back when; they brought the whole kit and kaboodle this time!)—and it's *still* not enough. The readers want more team-ups and slugfests. Unfortunately, some of the matchups were...less than inspired (the Wolverine/Lobo fight was quicker than the Tyson/Bruno bout). While this whole team-up deal was pretty cool, the fans, heck, *we* want more!



3. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

Now this is a comic with Top 10 stamina—it's been on this list for over *two years*! And don't start throwing us any "That's because it's so rare" back-talk. Fact: A couple years ago, readers jonesed for something new—something with both blast-butt *chutzpah* and true coolness. Fact: Out from Chaos! Comics popped Lady Death, and her wild story and wilder nature made her huge with fans. And fact: This death dame's non-stop barrage of killer mini-series kept her alive and kicking till today. And she's *still* making impressive chart history, climbing two spots this month! Try to talk back to *that*!

NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. ANGELA #1

WRITER: Neil Gaiman
ARTIST: Greg Capullo

There's nothing like a really powerful woman. The kind that can crack walnuts on her head. And Angela's just the gal to do it too! Just ask ol' Spawnie-Guy, he'll tell ya! Anyway, this mini-series gives fans more of the Spawn-huntress they've come to love as she enlists Spawn's help in a heavenly trial. Plus, with Angela's rival (angels have rivals?), Tiffany, vying for the number one angel spot in the monthly pages of *Spawn*—not to mention another *Angela* mini-series hittin' the stands later this year—look for this book to keep soaring.

NUMBER FIVE

5. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

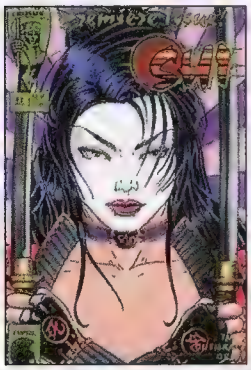
Ah, finally, a nice, light story about a young couple trying to find a Christmas present for each othe—what? But the cover says "Do Not Open Until X-Mas." Aw, shoot. Anyway, these paranormal-lovin' agents have created their own phenomena—Unstoppable Fan Outbreaks. With each issue of this popular 'n' classy comic based on the hit sci-fi show, you can bet that thousands of readers'll jump aboard—just like you can bet that every new character introduced on a standard TV episode will die by the end of the show. Speaking of eerie stories and unpleasant acts of violence and death…

6. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: Steve Dillon

A priest, an Irish vampire and an assassin walk into a bar with a duck on their heads…oh, wait. Sorry, wrong story. Close, but wrong. This one actually tells the tale of Preacher Jesse Custer, his ex-girlfriend-turned-assassin Tulip and Cassidy (that Irish vampire we mentioned), as they search for God (literally!). This highly violent and highly hysterical series is giving *Sandman* Withdrawal Vertigo fans a great monthly fix, but issues of this puppy are apparently harder to find then a rabbi at a christening!

NUMBER SIX



NUMBER SEVEN

7. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Barry Orkin

Okay, let's take some initiative here. Let's say the Bad Girl trend is over. *Fini*. Kaputsky. We'll even go out on a limb and say that people are looking for quality—like Shi's excellent adventures—and not huge heaving breasts. They want depth—like the fact that Shi has as much humanity as fighting skills—and not big thong-up-the-butt shots. They've had their days of drooling and are ready to read again, and books like *Shi* have been there for 'em all along. That's why *Shi*'s on this chart, and that's why *Shi*'ll stay.

NUMBER EIGHT

8. X-PATROL #1

WRITERS: Karl and Barbara Kesel
ARTISTS: Roger Cruz and Jon Holdredge

Wow! What's a bigger surprise, that this is the only mutant X-book charting this month or that it's the hottest Amalgam book? Well, with its freaky characters—like Ferro Man (a combo of Colossus and Ferro Lad) and Shatterstarfire ('nuff said)—and way-too-long origin recaps, we'd say the biggest surprise is how fun and enjoyable the story turned out to be. Either way, *X-Patrol*'s here because it's the only Amalgam book with an "X-" up front—no surprise there!

9. GEN[13] #1 (REGULAR SERIES)

WRITER: Brandon Choi
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

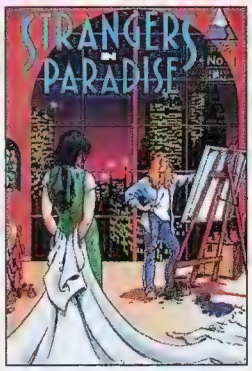
Talk about freaky—somehow, the first ish of the ongoing *Gen[13]* series replaced the opener to the mini-series in hot market activity, and on this chart! Somebody get those X-Files goons on the case! Anyways, these kids are the hottest teens this side of the Brady Kids (back in the '70s, that is)! And with the upcoming Gen[13] animated movie, toys and even video games, expect these kids to experience a nice boost in the near future and become even more popular than they currently are.

NUMBER NINE

10. STRANGERS IN PARADISE #1 (REG. SERIES)

WRITER: Terry Moore
ARTIST: Terry Moore

It's your classic case of low print run meets no-name creator meets great art meets well written stories. Figure it out yet? Yep, it's a hot book! This title, dealing with real-life people in real-life situations, is finally starting to catch on big time as Terry Moore's finding himself on the lips of more fans every day. (No, no, Mrs. Moore. That's just Terry's *name* on their lips). So go check out the adventures of the man-hatin' Katchoo, her fragile roommate Francine, and David, the nice guy in glasses. W



NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. GENERATION X #1 MARVEL
12. SPAWN #9 IMAGE
13. ASH #1 EVENT
14. THE X-FILES #2 TOPPS
15. AVENGELYNE #1 MAXIMUM
16. WOLVERINE #75 MARVEL
17. THE MAXX #1 IMAGE
18. MARVEL VERSUS DC #2 MARVEL/DC
19. SPAWN #1 IMAGE
20. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1 HARRIS

Sony Computer Entertainment America Presents...

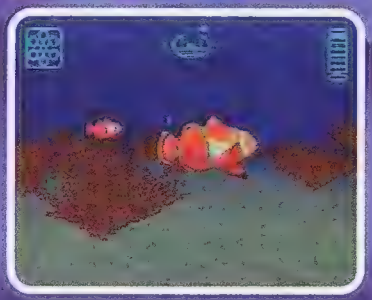
The "Make 'em Jealous" PlayStation™ Contest!

Beyond the Beyond™

Carnage Heart

Project Horned Owl™

Aquanauts Holiday™



Wanna be the envy of all your friends? Heck, be the envy of your enemies—that's more fun! Well, you can do it with the PlayStation game console. The graphics are unbelievable! They're so real, they're eerie. They pull you in so far that you almost forget to come out!

Now you can make every kid on the block (friend or enemy) jealous as all heck if you have a PlayStation game console of your very own. And you can get one by simply filling out the coupon below. It's that easy! And that's not all—just because the folks at Sony Computer Entertainment America are so swell, they'll even kick in a dozen games for you to play! That's right—12 PlayStation software tiles for free! Even your best friend will hate you. So fill out the coupon today! Hey, you can't win if you don't enter!

Bogey Dead 6™

Grand Prize (1):

One randomly picked reader will get a PlayStation game console and 12 PlayStation software titles!

This month's contest is sponsored by Sony Computer Entertainment America. They know a lot about video games and stuff.

PlayStation™

Fill out this coupon (don't forget the phone number), put it in an envelope and send to: "Make 'Em Jealous" PlayStation Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.
Deadline is June 28, 1996.

Playful Legalese

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Sony Computer Entertainment America and their immediate families. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5 inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: "Make 'Em Jealous" PlayStation Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted but you can photocopy the entry form before it leaves you if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the name of the contest winner and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by June 28, 1996. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected randomly among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on July 15, 1996.

For the name of the winner, available after July 15, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: "Make 'Em Jealous" Sony PlayStation Winner, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

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by Jon Warren

AMALGAM MEANS "HOT"

Who cares if the world doesn't know what the word "amalgam" means? It might as well mean "hot," because those amazing Amalgam Comics co-published by Marvel and DC Comics are going wild. Where else are you going to see a Superman who died on the way to Earth, Sue Storm as an agent of S.H.I.E.L.D., and a combination of Frankie Raye and Kyle Rayner who looks and acts like a kickin' Gal Gardner? All of these terrific titles are hot, but a few are sending fans over the edge:

• **Legend of the Dark Claw**

Combining Batman and Wolverine was a no-brainer, and this book is just as cool as everybody hoped it would be. Everything fans like best about Wolverine is here, along with the best Batman stuff revvin' it up to the max. Add Jubilee as his "Robin" and a perfect combo of the Joker and Sabretooth for the villain! Market-wise, this book is currently one of two hottest Amalgam books.

• **X-Patrol**

And here's the other one: While this book combining the X-Men and classic Doom Patrol had a solid enough (as in freshly entertaining) story, fans and retailers couldn't help but notice the demand for back issues. The combo of excellent story and art is keeping both *Shi* and *Tomoe* in take-off mode.

The *Marvel vs. DC* series is setiing off expected explosions in the market

The Quick List

What's Hot in the Comic Book Market

• ALL AMALGAM TITLES—These titles have fans talking like nothing else in years! In addition to the ones listed above, look for *Super-Soldier* and *JLX* to stay really hot. (And don't forget the *Marvel vs. DC* four-issue series! They're all hot too!)

• *GEN*[13]—Recent issues have been strong, and this title is again in strong demand. Look for the recent "Dark Caitlin" issues to hit similar demand levels, as well as the Gen[13]-Maxx team-up book.

• *GENERATION X*—February's Fox telefilm shot this title back onto the charts. The first issue is going nova, and all other issues are moving up as well.

• *PREACHER*—Demand just keeps rising for this offbeat book which keeps fans guessing, and also confounds retailers, who consistently under-order it.

• *SHI*—A bunch of recent crossover books have introduced Shi to a wider audience, and have increased her popularity and

• *STARMAN*—Yes, fans will buy a book that depends on mood and character, features a reluctant hero and the baddest Bad Girl around, and even has Golden Age heroes show up now and then.

• *STRANGERS IN PARADISE*—This comic is quietly moving up in both demand and reader recognition. No superheroes, but characters you can care about.

• *WOLVERINE*—Wolvie hit his big #100 in March, and is still going strong. That hundredth issue got fans talking and is already moving up on our hottest comics list.

• *THE X-FILES*—The TV series has been getting better ratings this season, and that's helping this book become even hotter. Plus, reprints haven't hurt the value of the early issues, as hardcore collectors and new readers snap 'em up.

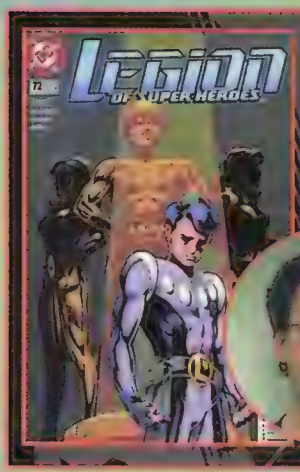
WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

1. **Peter David** — *Hulk, Aquaman, Marvel vs. DC*
2. **Neil Gaiman** — *Sandman*
3. **Mark Waid** — *Captain America, X-Men*
4. **Kurt Busiek** — *Astro City, Untold Tales of Spider-Man*
5. **Ron Marz** — *Green Lantern, Marvel vs. DC*
6. **Chuck Dixon** — *Robin, Detective Comics*
7. **Garth Ennis** — *Preacher, upcoming: Hitman*
8. **Karl Kesel** — *Adv. of Superman, Superboy*
9. **Scott Lobdell** — *Generation X, Uncanny X-Men*
10. **James Robinson** — *Starman*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. **Todd McFarlane** — *Spawn*
2. **Joe Madureira** — *Uncanny X-Men*
3. **Jim Lee** — *Gen13, upcoming: Fantastic Four*
4. **J. Scott Campbell** — *Gen13*
5. **Billy Tucci** — *Shi*
6. **Alex Ross** — *upcoming: Kingdom Come*
7. **Joe Liesner** — *Dawn*
8. **Joe Quesada** — *Ash*
9. **Greg Capullo** — *Spawn*
10. **Mike Wieringo** — *Robin, upcoming: Sensational Spider-Man*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS AND ARTISTS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.



WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR

TOM PEYER

One of the main writers behind the newest era of *Legion of Super-Heroes*, Peyer has helped reinforce every character with a unique personality, while reshaping the team's history with exciting, engaging stories. *Legion* editor KC Carlson says, "I appreciate his work because he can write in a number of different styles, making it very easy to come up with a lot of different story ideas. And his dialogue is the grooviest."

huge "X-" heading up the title, and snagged a ton of copies. Over-the-top "Amalgamites" like Elasti-Girl (DC's old E-G mixed with the Wasp and Domino) and Niles Cable (meshing The Chief and the X-Force leader) were wild enough to make this issue worth pouring dough into, and will assuredly keep people looking for it.

• **Bruce Wayne, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.**

A must-have book to accompany *Legends of the Dark Claw*, and it will probably pace *LOTDC* in value. But don't forget that this book will gather a following of its own, mostly from Marvel fans who miss the classic Nick Fury adventure stories.

• **Spider-Boy**

The absolute coolest of all the Amalgams, and we don't mean in value! We're betting this book will ultimately rival *Dark Claw* for collectability and eventual value. And it's the most fun of all the Amalgams to read. You get Spider-Boy, Reed Richards and his Challengers of the Fantastic, Doc Ock as SB's mentor and Bizarnage—a fusion of Carnage and Bizarro! Get this one while it's still a bargain!

• **Amazon**

Storm as Wonder Woman! What a concept! It seems readers really dug John Byrne and Terry Austin's reteaming. This one will be a good investment, as will its companion *Bullets and Bracelets*, which will follow it up the charts.

GOOD MONTH FOR BAD GIRLS

Bad Girl books are still where it's at. *Vampirella* and *Avengelyne* are turning fans on,

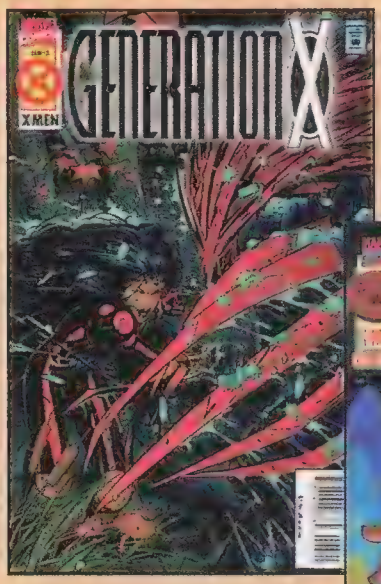
MARKET WATCHERS

Letters to the Price Guide

Q: I have a *WetWorks* art portfolio that I've eagerly been wanting to open, but I'm afraid if I do, it will drastically decrease in value. Will it? And if so, how much?

M. Coutts
Kelowna, B.C., Canada

A: Rarity, condition and other considerations aside, opened portfolios are generally worth about 10 percent less than ones that are still sealed. If you bought the portfolio purely for an investment and don't care about the art inside, don't open it. If you bought it because you like the art, then by all means open it, look at it, hold it, smell it, *enjoy* it—and don't worry about the value.



Q: How do comic artists and writers feel about values being placed on their signatures? Will it affect their signing habits? I'd hate to see them start charging for autographs like sports stars.

B. Kallenberg
Lambertville, MI

A: Most comics creators are flattered that readers want their John Hancocks, and don't plan to charge for them. Also, remember that in comics collecting, the real value is in the *book*, not the autograph, which only helps to enhance the value.

Q: How come, in some comics, they ask you to destroy the comic to enter an itty-bitty contest or get a lousy 50 cents off a $100 Barbie doll? This bugs the heck out of me!

G. Hamel
Leominster, MA

A: Because lots of readers go out and buy two copies of the issue so they can cut out the coupon or entry blank and enter the contest, or get the big discount on the Ultra Bimbo Barbie, and still have a mint copy. Luckily, most publishers will accept a photocopy of the offer and you can keep your comic intact.

Q: What's up with *Generation X*? They have a film on Fox, plus cards, T-shirts and toys, and yet there hasn't been any change in the value of their awesome comic in, like, forever! What's going on?

W. Wallace
Houston, TX

A: If prices for *Generation X* books aren't going up, it's because demand isn't going up. But don't worry—because of that sucky movie, prices of *Generation X* issues are actually starting to rise.

That's all for this month, folks! Keep the questions coming—I'll be here to answer 'em!

—Jon Warren
Still Offering Free Autographs

Got questions? Send 'em to:

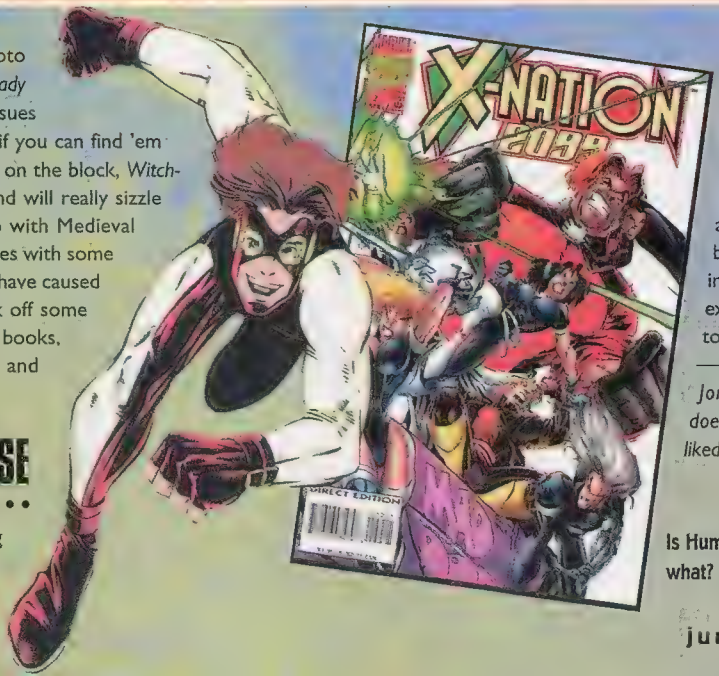
Market Watchers
c/o Jon Warren
P. O. Box 2512
Chattanooga, TN 37409

Or send e-mail directly to the guy himself:
JonRWarren@aol.com

thanks to the eye-catching photo covers and pin-up pages. The *Lady Death Lingerie* and *Swimsuit* issues have taken a sudden upturn; if you can find 'em cheap, grab 'em. The new kid on the block, *Witchblade*, continues to be hot, and will really sizzle when her upcoming team-up with Medieval Spawn appears. Recent troubles with some retailers selling adult material have caused a lot of shop owners to back off some of the more explicit Bad Girl books, making them harder to find, and increasing their value.

ACTING ON IMPULSE

This title is quietly becoming one of the most popular and collectible around. Humberto Ramos' artwork has really been catching on with fans, and the offbeat stories by Mark Waid are fun to read. Number one is really moving up fast, and you can expect other early issues to follow. **W**



Jon Warren surprisingly doesn't know anyone who liked the movie "Babe."

Is Humberto Ramos hot or what?

WIZARD® TOP 100

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of MARCH.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for March. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books (listed in **boldface type**). **(CE= Collector's Edition)**

1. **DC vs. Marvel #4 (DC/Marvel)**
2. **Wolverine #100 (Marvel)**
3. Uncanny X-Men #332 (Marvel)
4. **Legends of the Dark Claw #1 (DC/Marvel)**
5. X-Men #52 (Marvel)
6. **Magneto & The Magnetic Men #1 (Mar./DC)**
7. **X-Patrol #1 (Marvel/DC)**
8. Wolverine #101 (Marvel)
9. **Spider-Boy #1 (Marvel/DC)**
10. JLX #1 (DC/Marvel)
11. Amazon #1 (DC/Marvel)
12. Bruce Wayne: A. of S.H.I.E.L.D. #1 (Mar./DC)
13. Spawn #47 (Image)
14. Spawn #46 (Image)
15. Super Soldier #1 (DC/Marvel)
16. **Gen[13] #9 (Image)**
17. Bullets and Bracelets #1 (Marvel/DC)
18. Speed Demon #1 (Marvel/DC)
19. Assassins #1 (DC/Marvel)
20. Generation X #15 (Marvel)
21. Doctor Strangefate #1 (DC/Marvel)
22. X-Man #15 (Marvel)
23. Gen[13]: Ordinary Heroes #2 (Image)
24. X-Force #54 (Marvel)
25. Spawn/WildC.A.T.s #3 (Image)
26. X-Factor #122 (Marvel)
27. Cable #31 (Marvel)
28. Storm #4 (Marvel)
29. Excalibur #97 (Marvel)
30. **Lady Death: The Odyssey #1 (Chaos!)**
31. Amazing Spider-Man #411 (Marvel)
32. **Grifter/Shi #1 (Image)**
33. Askani'Son #4 (Marvel)
34. Spider-Man #68 (Marvel)
35. **Angela/Glory: Rage of Angels (Image)**
36. Sensational Spider-Man #4 (Marvel)
37. Spectacular Spider-Man #233 (Marvel)
38. Spectacular Spider-Man #234 (Marvel)
39. **Death: The Time of Your Life #2 (DC)**
40. Batman #530 CE (DC)
41. **WildC.A.T.s #28 (Image)**
42. Incredible Hulk #441 (Marvel)
43. Adventures of Superman #534 (DC)
44. **Fire From Heaven #1 (Image)**
45. Action Comics #721 (DC)
46. Superman: The Man of Steel #56 (DC)
47. **The X-Files #16 (Topps)**
48. Witchblade #5 (Image)
49. **Star Wars: Heir to the Empire #5 (D.H.)**
50. Tomoe #3 (Crusade)
51. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #50 (DC)
52. X-Nation 2099 #3 (Marvel)
53. Batman: Leg. of the Dark Knight #82 (DC)
54. Avengers #397 (Marvel)
55. Avengers #398 (Marvel)
56. **Captain America #451 (Marvel)**
57. Spider-Man Unlimited #12 (Marvel)
58. Fantastic Four #412 (Marvel)
59. Venom: The Hunted #1 (Marvel)
60. Cyberforce #21 (Image)
61. Robin #29 (DC)
62. Professor X and the X-Men #7 (Mar.)
63. Thor #498 (Marvel)
64. X-Men 2099 #32 (Marvel)
65. Venom: Along Came a Spider #4 (Mar.)
66. Sin City: That Yellow Bastard #2 (D.H.)
67. **Sigma #1 (Image)**
68. What If? #85 (Marvel)
69. **S. Wars: X-Wing R.S.—P. Affair #2 (D.H.)**
70. **Sword of Damocles #1 (Image)**
71. Catwoman #33 (DC)
72. **Marvel Heroes #1 (Marvel)**
73. Azrael #17 (DC)
74. Wonder Woman #109 (DC)
75. Weapon Zero #2 (Image)
76. **Star Wars: Tales from M. Eisley (D.H.)**
77. Deathblow #26 (Image)
78. Flash #113 (DC)
79. Iron Man #328 (Marvel)
80. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #9 (Marvel)
81. Spider-Man 2099 #43 (Marvel)
82. Superboy #27 (DC)
83. Team 7 III: Dead Reckoning #3 (Image)
84. Backlash #18 (Image)
85. **All New Exiles #6 (Malibu)**
86. Glory #10 (Image)
87. Silver Surfer #115 (Marvel)
88. Silver Surfer #116 (Marvel)
89. Daredevil #352 (Marvel)
90. Ripclaw #5 (Image)
91. Deathblow #25 (Image)
92. New Warriors #71 (Marvel)
93. Savage Dragon #27 (Image)
94. Green Goblin #8 (Marvel)
95. StormWatch #34 (Image)
96. Impulse #13 (DC)
97. **Youngblood #6 (Image)**
98. Phoenix Resurrection #0 (Malibu)
99. **Aquaman #20 (DC)**
100. Vengeance of Vampirella #24 (Harris)

AT THE TOP:

Wolverine bounded up to right near the top again, celebrating his 100th anniversary issue. Although he couldn't topple *DC vs. Marvel*'s lock at the summit, it's still a very impressive showing for this perennially popular X-Man. He can also claim responsibility for DC/Marvel's *Dark Claw* book (which meshed him and Batman) being the #1 Amalgam issue. This and DC's other five Amalgam books gave the company its highest numbers in years; maybe they should place the Amalgam logo on more comics (just kidding). Marvel's top Amalgam offerings were *Magneto & The Magnetic Men* and *X-Patrol*, thanks to their X-connections, while the well-done *Spider-Boy* book swooped in right behind them.

IN THE MIDDLE:

Practically every March-released comic was a casualty of the Amalgam tie-up of the first quarter of the Top 100. Image's sizable *Gen[13]* and *Spawn* drops are examples that quickly come to mind, but if you're worried about your favorite book, remember—this is a temporary Amalgam-caused slump. Books with still-strong showings included the latest *Lady Death* and *Death* mini-series issues and the *Grifter/Shi* and *Angela/Glory* team-ups—readers are still crazy about all these characters. The launcher of *Fire From Heaven*, WildStorm's major summer crossover, clocked in at a solid #44, but was beaten by its *WildC.A.T.s* tie-in (Alan Moore's work is keeping that title hot, and just wait till Jim Lee returns). *X-Files*' slight drop was probably due to its erratic shipping schedule, which has buyers confused as to when each new issue is shipping.

IN THE SECOND HALF:

Captain America's still a success story, fueled by Mark Waid and Ron Garney's outstanding work. Marvel's exciting look into the past of Cap and company helped *Marvel Heroes* #1 place fairly well. The consistent quality of Dark Horse's *Star Wars* offerings keeps 'em blasting into the Top 100. WildStorm's two special *Fire From Heaven* tie-ins—*Sigma* and *Sword of Damocles*—rained down with good order numbers, while Extreme's longest-running title, *Youngblood*, needs a new push. The excellence of DC's ever-surprising *Aquaman* and X-cellence of Malibu's enjoyable mutant book *Exiles* helps them chart here month after month.

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CHARACTER PROFILE: The Hulk

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

REAL NAME: Robert Bruce Banner
AGE: early 30s
HEIGHT: (as Banner) 5' 9"; (as Hulk) 7' 6"
WEIGHT: (as Banner) 128 lbs.; (as Hulk) 1,150 lbs.
HAIR COLOR: (as Banner) Brown; (as Hulk) Black
EYE COLOR: (as Banner) Brown; (as Hulk) Green
FIRST APPEARANCE: *The Incredible Hulk* #1
TITLE CURRENTLY APPEARING IN: *The Incredible Hulk*
MAJOR ENEMIES: The Leader, The Maestro, The Abomination and rogue members of the Pantheon.

ORIGIN

A brilliant nuclear physicist, Dr. Bruce Banner was one of the army's most promising scientists. On the day of the test-firing of his experimental "gamma bomb," Banner ran into the zone near the bomb to rescue misdirected teenager Rick Jones. Throwing Rick into a ditch to ensure his safety, Banner was caught in the full blast of the bomb, being bathed by gamma radiation in the process. Miraculously, Banner survived the blast seemingly unharmed. Later that evening, though, the radiation bombardment took its toll, as Banner transformed into a huge, barely-human "Hulk" of a man fueled by emotion, with the intellect of a child.

Originally, Banner transformed into the Hulk only at night, but soon, Banner's transformations into the green goliath were triggered by anger or extreme stress. It has also been explained that the Hulk is merely a vehicle for Banner's angry split personality, a disorder which came as a result of his being abused as a child by his father.

The Hulk quickly became a fixture in the Marvel Universe, and had interactions (and altercations) with many of its heroes. Ironically, the Hulk was a founding member of the Avengers and the Defenders.

As a man ruled by reason and science, Banner quickly grew to hate his monstrous alter ego, a creature of pure emotion and uncontrolled anger. Often, Banner would go to great lengths to prevent his transformation into the Hulk, and fail. More often than not, the childlike Hulk just wanted to be left alone, but would attack if threatened, bellowing a characteristic "Hulk smash!"

Above: The green, savage Hulk

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

The physiological change that turned Banner into the Hulk has been shown to be variable, and Banner has gone through nearly every Hulk/Banner combination imaginable, including a green, savage Hulk, a green Hulk with Banner's intellect and a canny gray Hulk with its own personality. On more than one occasion, Banner has physically separated himself from his alter ego, only to be forced to rejoin it again later. During one of these separations, Banner married his longtime love, Betty Ross.

Recently, with the aid of psychologist/superhero Leonard "Doc" Samson, Banner was able to face the traumas of his father's abuse that were responsible for splitting his personality into different parts, and merge all the pieces into a whole. The result was a new, green Hulk with a hybrid intellect: the genius of Banner combined with the subtle ruthlessness of the grey Hulk and rage of the savage green Hulk; he basically became a six-and-a-half-foot muscular nuclear physicist with a chip on his shoulder.

Probably the most disturbing chapter in Banner's life came when he was taken to a possible totalitarian future where the Hulk savagely ruled the earth as "The Maestro." Forced to confront this evil version of himself, Banner ultimately killed the Maestro, but not before hearing Maestro's prediction that it is Banner's destiny to become the Maestro.

While Banner and the Hulk are now one and the same, he must now fight to keep his temper in control, due to yet another change in his gamma-influenced physiology: Now whenever he lets his rage control him, he has a sort of mental safety precaution that transforms him to his human Bruce Banner form with the intellect of the savage Hulk. This serves to prevent the mass destruction he would cause in his Hulk form.

Recently, the Hulk's involvement with the Pantheon (a secret anti-terrorist organization) caught up to him, alienating him from S.H.I.E.L.D., many other superheroes and nearly every law-enforcement agency on Earth. On the run, he took the name "Bob Danner" and wrapped his head in bandages, settling in suburban Florida with a job as an auto mechanic. He was soon brought out of hiding by the machinations of his nemesis, The Leader—who is determined to break Banner, physically, mentally and emotionally—and circumstances have caused him to go insane and actually become The Maestro.

Below: The Hulk's most recent incarnation
At right: The conniving grey Hulk and the evil Maestro

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

At the conclusion of the "Ghosts of the Future" storyline in *Hulk* #440, the Hulk was caught in a nuclear explosion. He has disappeared, and is presumed dead by much of the world, but not by Rick Jones and Betty Banner. "They've been down that road before," says *Incredible Hulk* writer Peter David, who's been writing the title for nine years now. "So when they hear about his 'death,' they respond pretty much with a 'Oh, yeah, tell me another one' attitude."

But rest assured, the Hulk will return. Whether or not it's the Hulk we know and love remains to be seen, however. "He'll be different from before," David says. "He'll be darker and more intense, and he'll be back with a lot of attitude."

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

- ***Incredible Hulk* #341**—On the run from S.H.I.E.L.D., the Hulk battles a reflection of himself in the form of the Man-Bull. All Man-Bull wants is for the Hulk to help cure him…or kill him if he can't. (Plus: Todd McFarlane art!)

- ***Incredible Hulk* #377**—Doc Samson unifies the Hulk's green, grey and Banner personalities into one. The result starts a brand-new era of Hulk stories.

- ***Incredible Hulk* #386-#387**—The Hulk must stop rogue Pantheon member from killing a 13-year-old boy who is prophesized to become the next Hitler. But does the Hulk even want to?

- ***Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect* mini-series**—The Hulk travels to a bleak future where his future self has killed all the other heroes, and rules as "The Maestro." It's a fight to the finish between our lovable Hulk and the incredibly evil Maestro.

SIMILAR TASTES

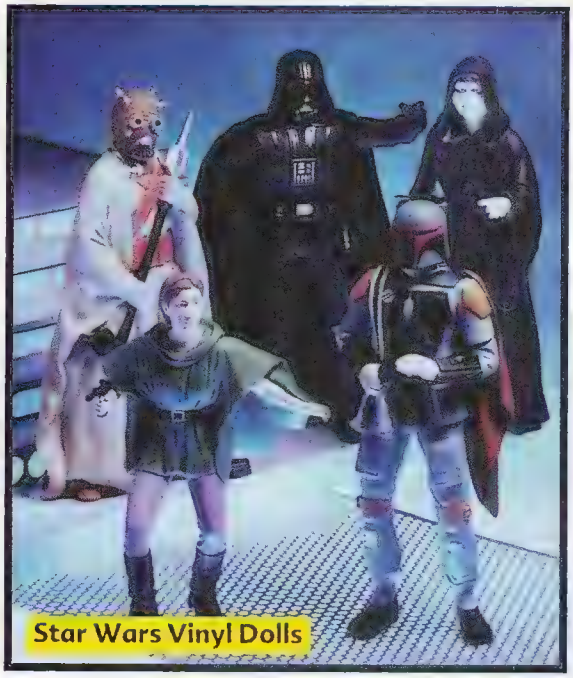
Looking for stories like those of the Hulk? Peter David has two novels for you: "*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson. Those are the books that inspired the character, and still have a lot to do with him," David says.

Hey, a few books without pictures now and then won't kill you, but if the idea of comics with hulking and misunderstood guys thrills you, check out *The Maxx* (Image), *Pitt* (Full Bleed Studios) and the current *Concrete: Think Like a Mountain* mini-series (Dark Horse). W

Matthew Brady, who did the Daredevil feature this issue, has been known to turn green and flex his muscles while growling. He's much better when he gets off the toilet, though.

JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything that we couldn't stretch into a full-page newsy thing



Star Wars Vinyl Dolls

SOMETHIN' TO REALLY APPLAUD!

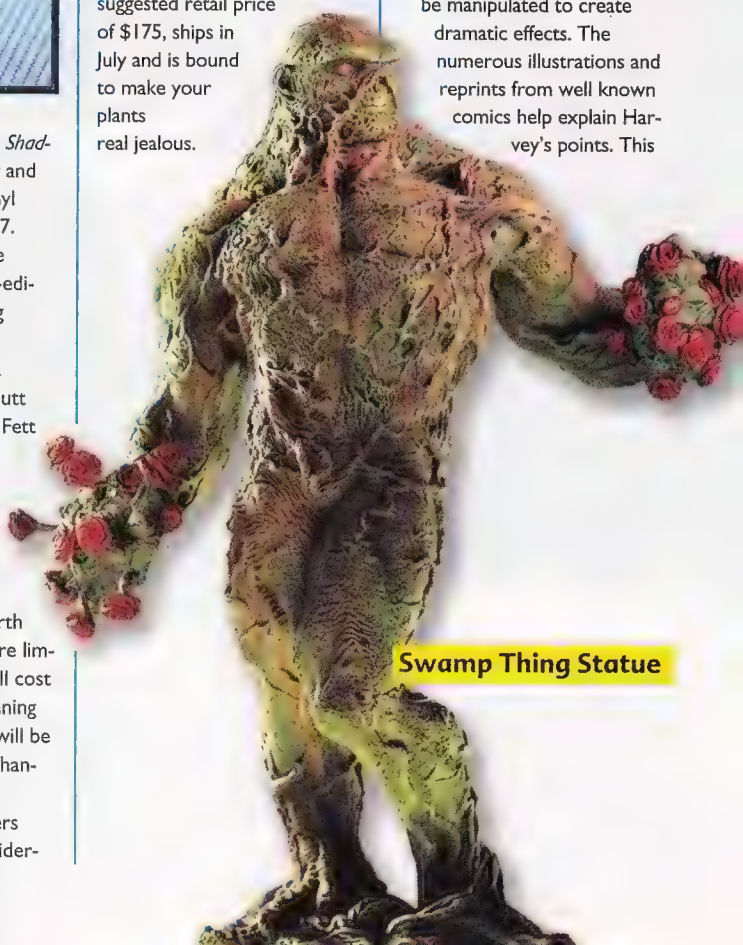
Applause has seized on the Star Wars craze that's currently hitting the planet by releasing a swarm of new Star Wars merchandise! Look for five new mugs, retailing for $15 each, featuring the Emperor, Han Solo, Tusken Raider, Bib Fortuna and a Gamorrean Guard. And check out the four new vinyl dolls which Applause hopes will be as popular as its previously sold-out ones. The new crop includes: Darth Vader (a second edition with a cloth cape), Boba Fett (second edition), Princess Leia and a Tusken Raider. In September, look for two other dolls based on characters from the new Dark Horse comic *Shadows of the Empire*: Xizor and Dash. These 10-inch vinyl dolls retail for about $17. September also sees the release of three limited-edition sculptures featuring scenes from Star Wars movies and comics. Get psyched for Jabba the Hutt and Princess Leia, Boba Fett and two other bounty hunters (only *true* Star Wars geeks'll know their names), and a scene from *Shadows of the Empire* featuring the Emperor, Xizor and Darth Vader. The sculptures are limited to 5000 pieces and'll cost ya $60 a pop. And beginning next January, Applause will be releasing a host of merchandise based on alla your favorite Marvel characters including the X-Men, Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four. We'll keep ya posted.

A BEAUTIFUL BLOOM

Swamp Thing! You make my heart sing! DC Comics and Vertigo have finally released a statue of the Earth Elemental himself. This really cool cold-cast porcelain statue is sculpted by William Paquet. The design, based on a poster by artist Michael Zulli (*The Sandman*), shows Swamp Thing with roses flowering out of each of his hands. This statue, limited to 4,000 pieces with a suggested retail price of $175, ships in July and is bound to make your plants real jealous.

UNDERSTANDING COMICS EVEN BETTER

If you're looking for a companion piece to Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*, Robert C. Harvey's new book *The Art of the Comic Book: An Aesthetic History* provides a good reference for any fan of comic book art. Harvey demonstrates the effectiveness of comics' use of words and pictures to tell stories in a unique way. He explains the processes of narrative breakdown, page layout and panel composition, while showing how these aspects can be manipulated to create dramatic effects. The numerous illustrations and reprints from well known comics help explain Harvey's points. This



Swamp Thing Statue

huge book, currently available in bookstores everywhere, comes in hardcover for $45 or softcover for $19.95.

TRUE WALL-CRAWLIN'

Tired of looking at the same old posters in your room? This May and June, Zanart Entertainment is releasing six X-Men and two Spider-Man collectible prints in comic shops nationwide. But these ain't no ordinary posters! The Zanart ChromArt process creates a 3-D image on a 2-D surface through the use of etched foil. The prints include: *X-Men* #1's cover featuring Wolverine, *Uncanny X-Men* #213's cover, two prints with team shots, *Wolverine* #1's cover, Wolverine vs. Sauron, Spidey from the cover of *Spider-Man* #1, and Spider-Man in the moonlight. Each Marvel ChromArt print, retailing for $15, will be limited to a production run of 2,500 and each comes with an individually numbered certificate of authenticity. Zanart will be announcing future Marvel-licensed prints shortly, including the Incredible Hulk, Captain America and the Fantastic Four, as well as prints based on the X-Files, Star Wars, Star Trek and Wing Commander.

NO BONES ABOUT IT

Following up on the ultra-neato Madman magnets from last month is Graphitti Designs' funky new Bone magnet set starring Jeff Smith's popular critters! So now you can hang up that gorgeous crayon-rendered portrait of yer family on the fridge with the help of Fone Bone, Phoney Bone and the Red Dragon. These full-color magnets are available in May for just $5.95 a set.

Green Lantern Watch

WATCH THIS!

Just like Kyle Rayner, you can now wear a really cool Green Lantern watch! This stylin' Green Lantern watch features the familiar Green Lantern emblem with a genuine black leather band. And get this, it actually tells time! This funky timepiece goes on sale in May for a mere $39.95.

A NOVEL APPROACH

Are you getting tired of all that silly art cluttering up the pages of your comics? Well, Ace's new book of short stories called *Superheroes* features some fantastic adventures of never-before-seen heroes. [*CAUTION: This is a* real *book! You will find it in a* real *bookstore!*] Edited by John Varley, these 25 short stories explore a wide array of characters and situations. Take "Theme Music Man," a story about a hero who provides just the right inspiring background music for other heroes, making them look (and sound) good for TV. And what if a character like Superman had not landed in Smallville, but crashed in Russia instead at the height of Soviet oppression?

The stories in this book explore all these ideas and more. With stories from Alan Dean Foster, Lawrence Watt-Evans, Roger Zelazny, Dennis O'Neil and many others, *Superheroes* is currently available in bookstores everywhere with a $5.99 cover price.

Fone Bone Magnet

COMIC COMPUTING

Toy Biz has recently released two new Marvel Interactive CD-ROM comics: *X-Men Phoenix Saga* and *Silver Surfer*. Similar to its other CD-ROM comics (starring Spidey, the FF, Iron Man and the X-Men), users can not only read the comics, but get background information, play trivia games, zoom-in to catch the small details and more. These CD-ROMs also provide back issue references, real video animation clips, sound bites, music and a live video introduction by Stan Lee himself. Both CD-ROMs are currently available with a suggested price of $14.99.

FROM RAGS TO STITCHES

Who said sewing sucks? Just look at this li'l guy. He's soooooo cute! Mike Allred's popular Madman character can now share some bed space with your other stuffed animals. Completely handmade by Rae Bell (that's Mike's mom, who initially just made a Madman rag doll for her granddaughter), these awesome dolls stand over 18-inches tall and will only cost you $34.95. So send yer check or money order to: Rae Bell, P.O. Box 721, Bluebell, UT 84007. And tell her *Wizard* sent ya!

Madman Rag Doll

HEY! Are you a company putting out some really nifty comic-related merchandise like Captain America toe-nail clippers, Luke Skywalker toilet ducks or even Superman hot chocolate? Well, we'd love to run it in our funky Junk Drawer section. (Of course, we'd much prefer posters, novels, T-shirts, sculptures, magnets, buttons, etc.) Please send any info to:

Junk Drawer
c/o Andrew Kardon
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

JUNK DRAWER video games

by Steve Brown

AND AWAY THEY GO

As 1996 flies by, it is becoming apparent that the party is over for certain companies, and even some gamers themselves. In March we had a few casualties, and 16-bit machines Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo are in critical condition. Out of all the games submitted to *Wizard* this month, only one was a 16-bit, and as you'll see later in this column it was a wretched effort. I've personally played and still play a lot of killer 16-bit titles, but the people who program, distribute and sell video games have totally deserted that segment. It's left you, the video gamer, only one choice...upgrade to a pricier system. The positive flip side is, the new and sexier 32-bit stuff has been fantastic and very much worth the extra cost.

It was a busy March for high-tech electronic company funeral homes. Six gaming systems officially passed away and ceased hardware production. Sega axed the 32X and Sega CD, which was actually a meaningless announcement, as Sega hasn't released any new titles lately anyway.

Speaking of meaningless, Phillips bowed out of the CDi, a total non-factor no one will miss. In a move that was made official at press time, the NeoGeo people also cashed in their chips, leaving all their fans a legacy of unfulfilled potential and an endless catalog of fighting games.

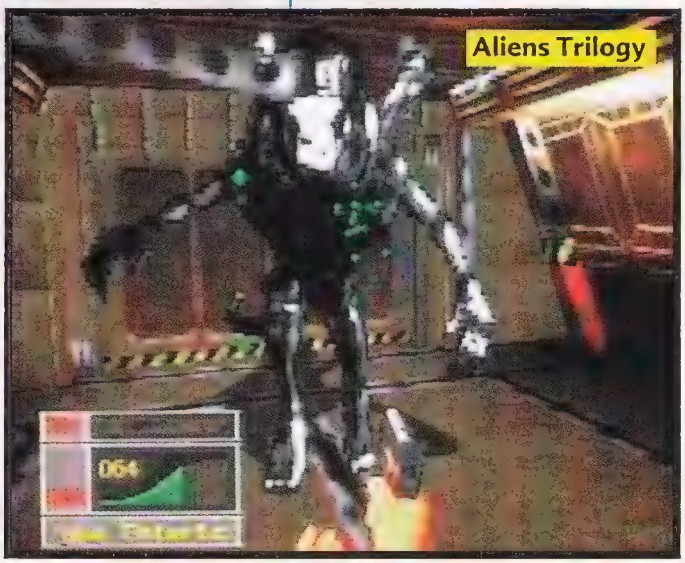
For owners of the 3DO/Goldstar, the death notice came as a shock, as the short-lived one-time champ couldn't withstand the one-two punch of the Saturn and PlayStation. The Goldstar people claimed to have been losing a hundred bucks a pop for every 3DO/Goldstar sold. Seeing as how easy it is to translate over and program 3DO/Goldstar titles, expect at least 12 to 20 titles to be posthumously released. Owners stung with the news, hold on to your machines, for a 64-bit upgrade called the M2 will be made available in the fall of 1996.

And after losing millions of dollars in every phase of home gaming, Atari—the juggernaut and trailblazer of the past—has decided to stop production of the Jaguar system. Sorry, Atari.

THE NEW 32'S

Like Jean Grey, the new 32-bit systems have risen from the ashes and grown in power through rebirth.

Acclaim has been one of the busiest suppliers of 32-bit games. Its *Aliens Trilogy* is a video game writer's dream—a hands-down crowd-pleasing gem of a game. Available now for the PlayStation, *Aliens* has it all: excellent length and action, great graphics, exploding xenomorphs, and that first-person *DOOM*like setup that puts you right in the game. This is a very dark game that is unfortunately unsuitable for young gamers—it's too intense. Utilizing scenes and scenarios from all three "Alien" films, Acclaim has released a classic, and probably capped off the *DOOM* knockoff genre.


Aliens Trilogy

Capcom's *Resident Evil*, for the PlayStation, is a triumph of the *DOOM*/*Myst* genre and a must-have game. It's a third-person perspective action game with elements of roleplaying and puzzle solving, plus a twist of the strange and the macabre. You control either pilot-dude Chris or tough-demolitions-babe Jill. The object of *Resident Evil* is twofold: Figure out what happened to your team members and escape. This house is filled with zombies, horrid froglike creatures and a host of tricks and traps. Lots of blood, gore and bullet-torn walking corpses litter the game and create a true gothic horror show. This game kicks total ass indeed.

Resident Evil

CAPCOM'S HEROIC EFFORTS

Capcom has also been hard at work utilizing its long-held Marvel Comics license. *Marvel Superheroes*, the arcade game, is a one-on-one fighting game that offers the same virtues of *X-Men: Children of the Atom*. As with *X-Men*, *Marvel Superheroes* has incredible graphics and cinema-quality animation. I couldn't find out who did the artwork of the game, but Marvel should sign him up, 'cause he'd be a huge improvement over Rob Lamefeld. *Marvel Superheroes* has an impressive roster: Spider-Man, Iron Man, Magneto, Hulk, Captain America, Juggernaut, Shuma-Gorath (a pal of Dr. Strange) and Psylocke. Each has their own

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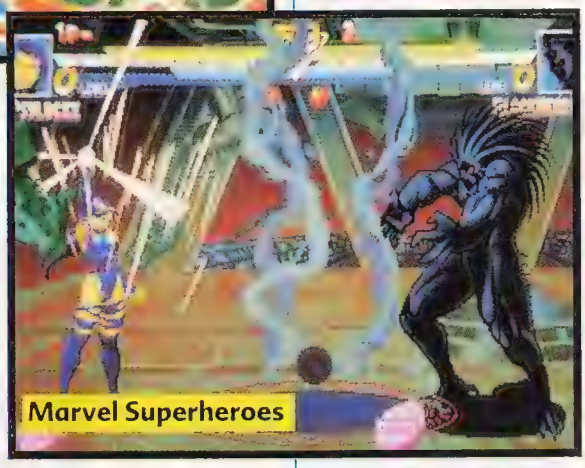
books. This action/adventure fighting game includes a life recovery feature and a cool Infinity Gem ability, which, when obtained, allows players to perform six new super moves, including time, mind, space and reality. I must warn you this is a very addictive arcade game, so bring lotsa quarters.

In one of Capcom's final SNES games, the company translated *Marvel Superheroes* to the 16-bit Super Nintendo. Due this summer, details are sketchy on this one, but one thing is clear: It will be a different game. A la *Maximum Carnage*, the home version of *MS* will be a side-scrolling adventure game, where you control five characters one at a time, much like the tired format of *X-Men: Mutant Apocalypse*. With a working title of *War of the Gems*, the game has the world's greatest heroes challenged by an unknown menace to track down the five Infinity Gems before the forces of evil can find them. Spider-Man, Hulk, Captain America, Iron Man and Wolverine are at your disposal. Standing in your way are Dr. Doom, Thanos, Blackheart and the Brood. Personally, it sounds like this game could go either way, given Capcom's track record; you'll want to rent it first before plunking down 70 bucks.



Marvel Superheroes

HERE COMES *SHADOAN*

I received an unexpected perk from writing this column recently: Rick Dyer, the creator of *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace*, paid me a visit. This video game maverick was on a press tour promoting his new game, *Shadoan*. It truly was a thrill to meet Rick and be one of the first to play his groundbreaking new adventure. Rick has had *Shadoan* in development for over 15 years, and it shows. It's got Tolkienesque mythology, breathtaking animation and superfast CD-ROM processing, eliminating almost all loading time, the bane of similar titles. Rick said that of his many successes, *Shadoan* is his proudest achievement, and I agree. It follows the adventures of the hero Lathan Kandor as he searches for the last remaining relics in the kingdom of Shadoan and confronts the evil wizard Torlok. This is a very difficult game; Rick said it will take over 20 hours to complete it, and that's if you're adept at this sort of game. A simultaneous release to the PC platforms—including Sony PlayStation, 3DO and Sega Saturn—is expected this summer. Since *Shadoan* is not backed by a million-dollar ad campaign, it may be tough to find. I really enjoyed this title, and I hope this sleeper catches on.

LOBO: A LAUGH

I was going to write about the Sega Genesis version of *Lobo*, but instead I'm going to write it off as a tired relic of the 16-bit fighting game era. All you need to know is the people at Ocean who created this disaster have all been canned. I can't believe DC Comics actually approved this dreck; they must be hard up for cash. *Lobo* in all likelihood will be the worst game released in 1996.

GEN[13] READY TO ROLL

Barely confirmed at presstime, the rumors are true...A GEN[13] VIDEO GAME IS IN THE WORKS!!! Electronic Arts, in an agreement with WildStorm, has been granted exclusive rights to the Gen[13] comic book series for virtually all platforms, including PlayStation, Saturn and Ultra 64 (which, by the way, has been delayed to late September, a big mistake on Nintendo's part). Not much is known on the actual game itself, and no artwork was available at presstime. "We're pleased to be teaming up with Jim Lee and WildStorm, with their proven success in the youth market," said EA's CEO Larry Probst. Gen[13] creator Jim Lee said of the agreement, "It's exciting to be working with a company like EA. They've got a great track record for developing awesome games. Both J. Scott Campbell and I have every confidence that they can deliver a fast action game that captures the look and feel of the Gen[13] comic book series, as well as the humor and playfulness of the characters." We here at *Wizard* hope they can also capture the female characters' uncanny ability to wear almost nothing at all while ridding the world of evil.

Shadoan

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bullpen

AMALGAM-OFF!

When Wizard Press Production Director and world-renowned pessimist Doug Goldstein heard of the Amalgam books featuring the merged DC and Marvel characters, the first words outta his goateed kisser was "Ah, they're gonna suck." Rising to the Amalgam defense was Promotions & Publicity Manager Jim McLauchlin, who dared Doug to put his money where his mouth was. With Copy Editor Andrew Kardon as the sole judge, the bet was on: If the majority of the books were lame, Doug wins. If the majority of 'em were cool (or the ruling was a tie), Jim wins. The bet: The loser picking up the all-you-can-eat/drink tab at the Jekyll & Hyde club in Greenwich Village, N.Y. So what was the end result? The Wizard crew piling into a van, taking a road trip into the city...and Doug picking up the tab. When asked about the 8/4 decision (only *JLX*, *Assassins*, *Amazon* and *Magneto & the Magnetic Men* were deemed clunkers), Goldstein grumbled, "Last month I was robbed of grand prize in the Chili-Off, and now I'm being screwed outta some serious cash. I think God's against me." What'd Jim have to say? Two words: "More Mimosas!"

PONG CHAMPIONSHIP!

As reported last month, the first Wizard Ping-Pong championship was launched, and after a month-long series of bouts, the two orneriest paddle-slingers of Wizard Press duked it out: Designer Robin Ramos and the aforementioned Jim McLauchlin. After a fast and furious best-of-five tournament, Robin "The Lob" Ramos scooped up the win 3-2, with the final game locked up at 21-19. Reigning champ Ramos gorged himself on the grand prize—eat/drink till you puke at El Bandido, the best Mexican grub Spring Valley, N.Y., has to offer—while "I'm just gonna put on some pretty clothes and cry" was all the humbled McLauchlin had to say.

TOP TEN

Top 10 ways old age has affected the DC superheroes in *Kingdom Come*

10. Shazam lost the support of three gods, now known only as "Ham."
9. Spectre gets Alzheimer's, starts punishing sock puppets.
8. Bat-Depends.
7. Superman now known as "Trying Really Hard Man."
6. Impulse now No-Pulse.
5. Flash now wears Rockport shoes and "takes it easy" when the sun is out.
4. Florida now the safest state in U.S.
3. Green Lantern admits sex is like "trying to shoot pool with a rope."
2. Batman keeps forgetting the Riddler's questions, the Riddler the answers.
1. Two words: Amazonian menopause.

MORT OF THE MONTH

HECTOR HAMMOND

Look, another one of those wacky Amalgam characters! We're guessing this one's a cross between The Leader and...Mr. Drummond from "Diff'rent Strokes"? No? Then it's just gotta be another unfortunate old DC character. Ol' Hector here found a meteorite in the California hills and, after seeing how it made local villagers evolve into futuristic lifeforms, exposed himself (!) to its rays and grew a big genius head and immortality. The downside: He's now completely paralyzed. Good. Now he can't run away when we try and break open his pasty *piñata* melon and see if any candy spills out.

MORT-O-METER:

ON SALE NOW

InQuest #14

Kicking off with a kick-ass **Michael Whelan Hurloon Minotaur vs. Serra Angel** cover, issue #14 of *InQuest* brings home the bacon with an **expanded "Killer Decks" spotlight** featuring five tournament-level killer *Magic* decks, a **beginner's guide to the new *Star Wars* CCG**, an interview with fantasy artist **Michael Whelan** and a sit-down chat about *Magic* with its creator **Richard Garfield**! Factor in all the cool free crap we've stuffed in the book and you have a magazine so exciting it will kill you. And hey, it's only **$3.99**!

CONTEST WINNERS

ROGUE/GAMBIT LOVE LETTER, *WIZARD* #53

To Gambit: Adrienne Laura McKenzie of Renton, Wash.
To Rogue: Mike Lorenz of Bensalem, Pa. (Check out his amazing music box, which plays "The Impossible Dream" as the lovers spin around!)

C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

from page 187

1. D	6. A	11. B	16. B
2. A	7. D	12. A	17. B
3. D	8. C	13. C	18. A
4. C	9. D	14. C	19. A
5. B	10. C	15. B	20. D

WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

DREW HAYES

POISON ELVES

Don't bet the farm that DC and Marvel will be beating a path to the door of *Poison Elves*' creator Drew Hayes anytime soon. "I think that I've given people enough information to scare them away," chuckles the 26-year-old Hayes. "I'm a little too unhinged to work for Marvel and DC."

Hayes' inspiration for *Poison Elves* (which began as a self-publishing adventure with Mulehide Graphics in 1993 and is currently under the Sirius banner) is the by-product of a barrage of influences. "*Poison Elves* is influenced by parts of my life, music and a lot of stuff I read as a teenager." Since the series places decidedly individualistic characters in a twisted fantasy, his life merits looking into.

Hayes, born in Los Angeles and raised in Spokane, Washington, says he was "a normal kid but a little weird" and only an occasional comics abuser, with an independent streak that flowered at age 13 as he started getting heavily into *Cerebus* and *Elfquest*. That fantasy fix salved a rough transition into the real world.

"I dropped out of high school in my senior year," reflects Hayes, who did get an equivalency sheepskin. "I couldn't stand to be institutionalized. I tried college for half a semester but I dropped out again. I had a real heavy antisocial streak going. Then I started working normal jobs. You know the kind where they say, 'Okay, you've got two arms, two legs—you're hired.' "

Photo courtesy of Drew Hayes

Hayes hit rock bottom when he was fired from a dishwashing job. "I was just sick of it all. I knew I could draw, but I didn't want to be 45 and drawing tampons and beer cans for some big, commercial agency. I thought, 'Well, you like comics; why don't you do that?' I guess I was fooling myself," he laughs.

Hayes spent the next two-and-a-half years making attempts to get into the comic biz, thinking all along that self-publishing was the way to go and basically refusing to play the comic book game. "I never went to the conventions and I never tried submitting to Marvel and DC because I kind of imagined how it would go. I wanted total control, and so I knew self-publishing was the way to go."

His family, tired of watching Hayes slam his head against the wall, floated him a loan and, in 1991, *I, Lusiphur* (a Mulehide book which became *Poison Elves* with #11 in 1993) hit the bricks. "I was determined to make it work, but the overall process was kind of surreal. It didn't really hit me until the copies of that first issue came back from the printer and the orders started coming in. It was like, 'Wow! You're really doing this!' "

Hayes, who during his Mulehide *Poison Elves* run also did stories for *Elfquest: Hidden Years* #10, *Rare Bit Fiends* #5 and covers for *Strange Attractors*, stubbornly continues his independent streak but concedes he's mellowing. "I started out with the typical amateur mindset. I felt I was going to blow everybody away and did not realize that, when you're first starting out in comics, you're nothing. I wasn't dumb enough to compare myself to somebody who was really good, but I did go through a series of reality checks. Finally I just got a grip."

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...
Uncanny X-Men #143

Favorite comic of all time...
Cerebus #23

Favorite work of your own...
Poison Elves, since Sirius took it over.

Comics you currently read...
Strangers in Paradise, Stray Bullets, Johnny: The Homicidal Maniac

The one person you'd like to meet...
Jack Nicholson. He's so cool.

Superpower you would most want...
Invisibility

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Coffee

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid, metallic Shogun warriors, because they had all these sharp things kids could swallow and hurt themselves [with]. As an adult, my stereo.

Things you collect...
Human skulls and weird-looking action figures

Person who would play you in a movie...
Tom Arnold

Favorite cartoon...
"Starblazers"

People you would most like to work with...
James O'Barr and Henry Rollins

Favorite musical performer...
Henry Rollins

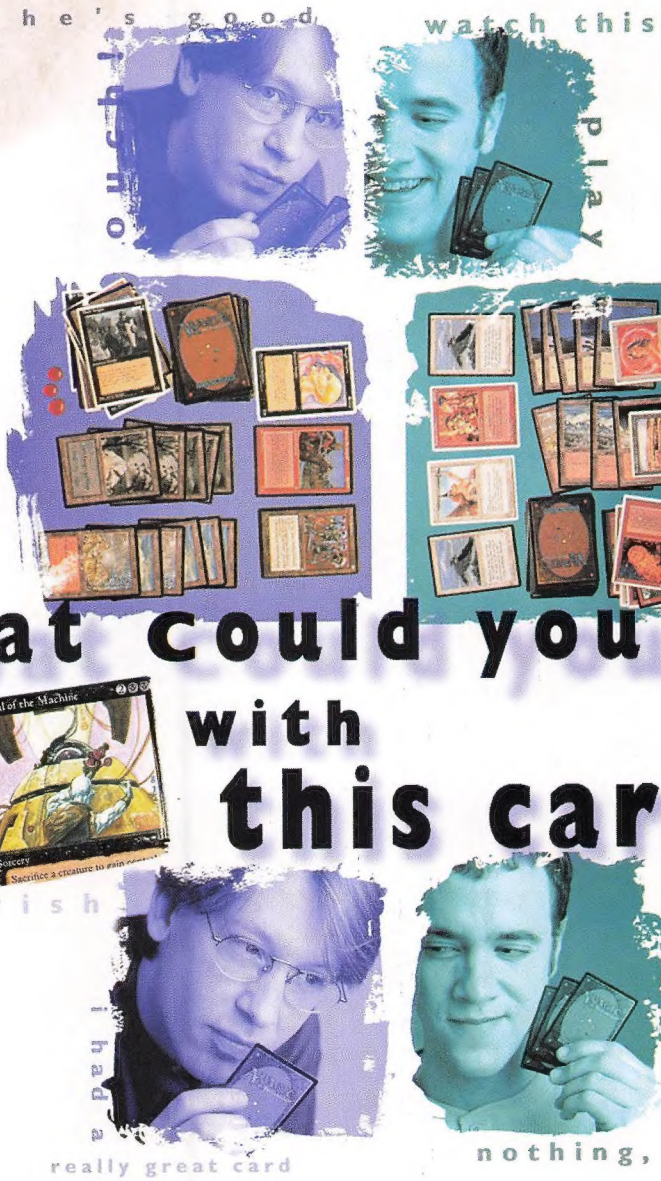
Favorite TV show...
"Seinfeld"

Last good movie you saw...
"Waterworld"

Last good book you read...
American Psycho, by Bret Easton Ellis

If you had the power of The Beyonder...
I don't think people like me are made for that kind of responsibility.

W



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